Medel was not tortured, say NBI findings

STORY ON PAGE A2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2001 ★ 44 PAGES 4 SECTIONS VOL.15 NO. 359 ₱15

P'WEDE AKO DITO... LEFT-HANDED AKO, E!

'Red' hot lovers only

LONDON—Lonely hearts looking for love through a British dating agency had better make sure their roses are red and their commitment is to the cause.

Socialist Partners bills itself as the only

RED/ A16

Filipina dies in Israel bombings; 4 also hurt

By Blanche S. Rivera and Norman Bordadora

A FILIPINO woman was among the 15 people killed in a bus explosion set off by a suicide bomber Sunday in Haifa, Israel, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said yesterday.

Sto. Tomas said Rosalia Reyes, 40, of San Juan, Batangas, died from shrapnel wounds. Four other Filipinos—identified as Raul Vibas (or

FILIPINA/ A16

PCGG: No to coco levy agreement

By Donna S. Cueto and Dona Pazzibugan

"ILLEGAL and immoral." This was the declaration of Haydee Yorac, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), on the proposed compromise settlement of the multibillion-peso coconut levy funds brokered by Dante Ang, President Macapagal-Arroyo's personal publicist.

The settlement is as good as dead.

In her first public statement since the controversy on the settlement erupted last week, Yorac said the settlement would allow Marcos cronies, who had benefited from the coco levy, particularly businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., Zamboanga City Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat and former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, to keep their plundered loot.

"It appears contrary to the purported intent of the laws imposing the coco levy. The declared intent was to create a public trust fund for the farmers, not a private source of capital for Marcos and his cronies," said Yorac, hours before she met with the President last night.

After meeting with PCGG officials led by Yorac, the President ordered Ang and presidential adviser on special concerns, Norberto Gonzales Jr., to "desist from interfering" in compromise talks over the coco levy funds.

Ms Macapagal said in the meeting that all proposed settlement deals "will have to go through the PCGG."

Yorac said she was "satisfied" with the outcome of the meeting.

"Yes, yes, including her instructions with private persons not, to interfere with our work," she said.

Yorac said she did not have to ask the President to instruct Ang and Gonzales to stay away from the talks as this would give the impression that they had authority from Malacañang.

"The President saw the problem that this perception will give rise to. So on her own she announced that henceforth these people, who are ostensibly working on their own, would have to desist from interfer-

PCGG/ A4

Bishop says Ang came to meeting uninvited

By Rocky Nazareno

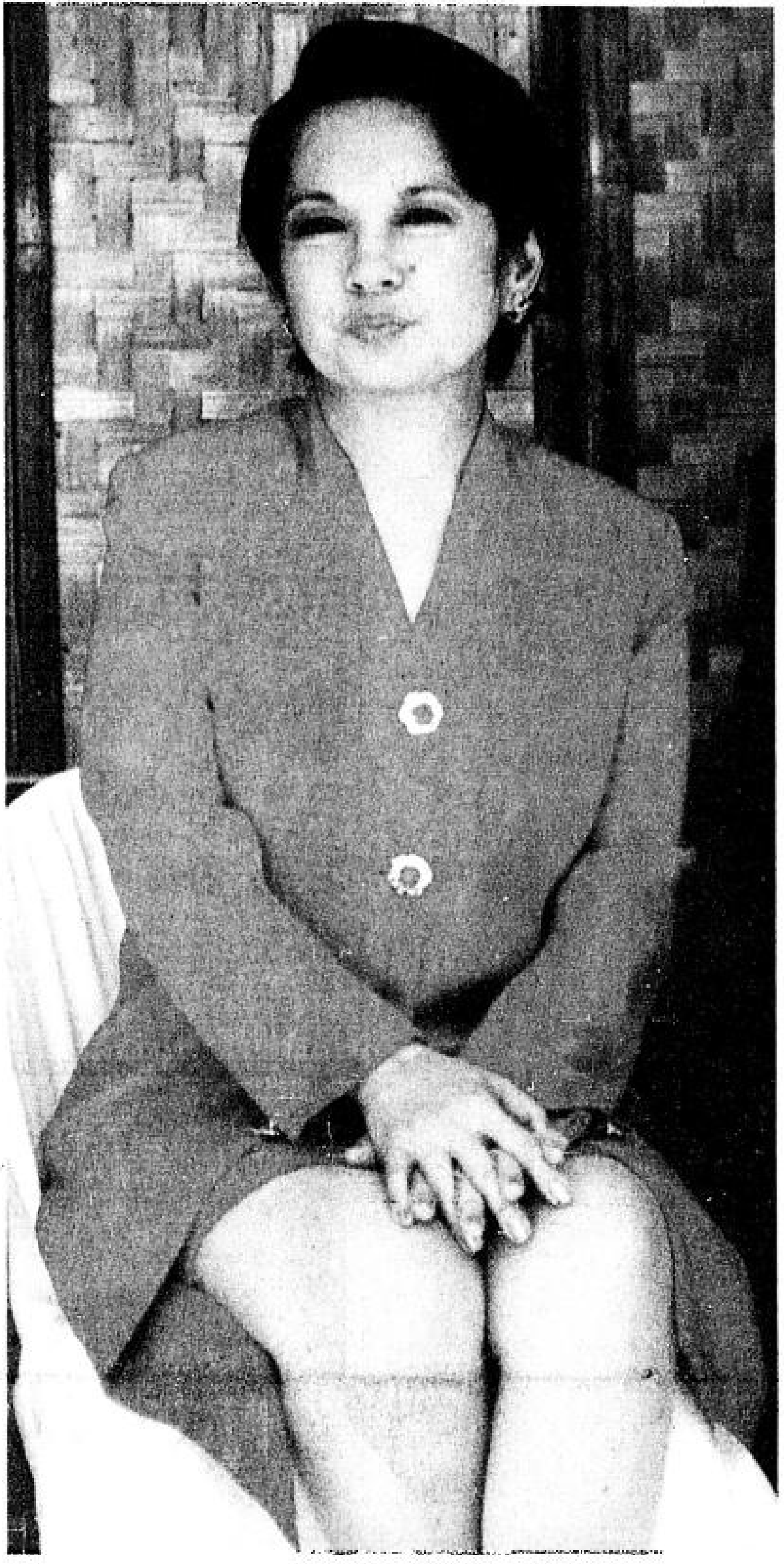
ARCHBISHOP Fernando Capalla said Dante Ang, President Macapagal-Arroyo's personal publicist, introduced himself as the cousin of Ramon Ang when he joined a dialogue between coconut farmers and businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. at the his residence in Davao City on Sept. 26.

Ramon Ang is the vice chair of San Miguel Corp., which is chaired by Cojuangco.

Capalla, chair of the Bishops-Ulama Forum (BUPPFLAC), said the President's personal publicist came to the meeting uninvited.

"I did not invite Mr. Dante Ang in the first place simply because I did not know him and his coming

BISHOP/ A4



WINSOME: President Macapagal here at the opening rites of National Energy Week looks like a winner in the latest SWS survey. EDWIN BACASMAS

GMA rating at 'record high,' says SWS survey

By Carlito Pablo

CRITICS of President Macapagal-Arroyo can eat their hearts out.

According to the Social Weather Stations, public satisfaction with the President has risen to a "record high" because she is perceived to be "serious" in fighting terrorism, illegal drugs and corruption in the government. Even the ratings of top officials and the major branches of the government have also improved.

The SWS said in a report issued yesterday that in its fourth-quarter national survey conducted on Nov. 3-21, the President's satisfaction rating rose to 53 percent—"an absolute majority for the first time" since March.

The survey had 1,200 "statistically representative adult respondents," with an error margin of plus and minus 3 percent at a confidence level of 95 percent.

"The survey items in this report are not commissioned and were included on SWS's own initiative," the poll firm said.

The SWS said 26 percent of the respondents were dissatisfied with the President's performance, for a net satisfaction rating of plus 27, her highest rating since her previous high rating of plus 24 in March.

It said her performance rating improved from her net rating of plus 15 in its Sept. 1-18 survey.

The President scored more than majority ratings in her efforts in addressing three of the country's problems: terrorism (62 percent), illegal drugs (59 percent) and corruption (52 percent).

GMA/ A4

BID exec suspended over Marcelo arrest fiasco

By Cynthia D. Balana, Carlito Pablo and Rocky Nazareno

ASSOCIATE Immigration Commissioner Orlando Dizon has been suspended for swooping down on the Senate building last week to arrest businessman Pacifico Marcelo, a vital witness in a telecommunications franchise controversy.

Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo yesterday said four other agents, who went with Dizon, were ordered reprimanded for wrongly implementing her mission order.

Also yesterday, Sen. Joker Arroyo, chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee, finally called a hearing on the telecommunications franchise scandal.

Giving in to pressure from the opposition, Arroyo scheduled the hearing between Dec. 10 and Dec. 14.

In a press statement, Arroyo said the committee would invite Marcelo to testify.

Marcelo has accused President Macapagal-Arroyo of demanding a majority ownership of his company, the Philippine Communications Clearinghouse Inc. (PCCI), in exchange for the recall of the veto she had issued against the congressional franchise granted to the firm.

While he may tell all against the

BID/ A4

Serge O under fire over ransom for Reghis

HOW could a senator of the Republic violate the government's no-ransom policy when the ransom money paid to the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers could well be used to buy firearms to kill Filipino soldiers?

More criticisms have been thrown at Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, after he admitted that at the request of the government he helped deliver a P17-million ransom for the release in June of construction magnate Reghis Romero II and two other hostages.

"His statement was self-incriminating because as a high-ranking official, he certainly must be aware that the government has a no-ransom policy," House defense committee chair Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. yesterday said.

"How could he help violate this policy knowing full well that the Abu Sayyaf would use this money

SERGE/ A16

Erratum: Like Karen and Gina

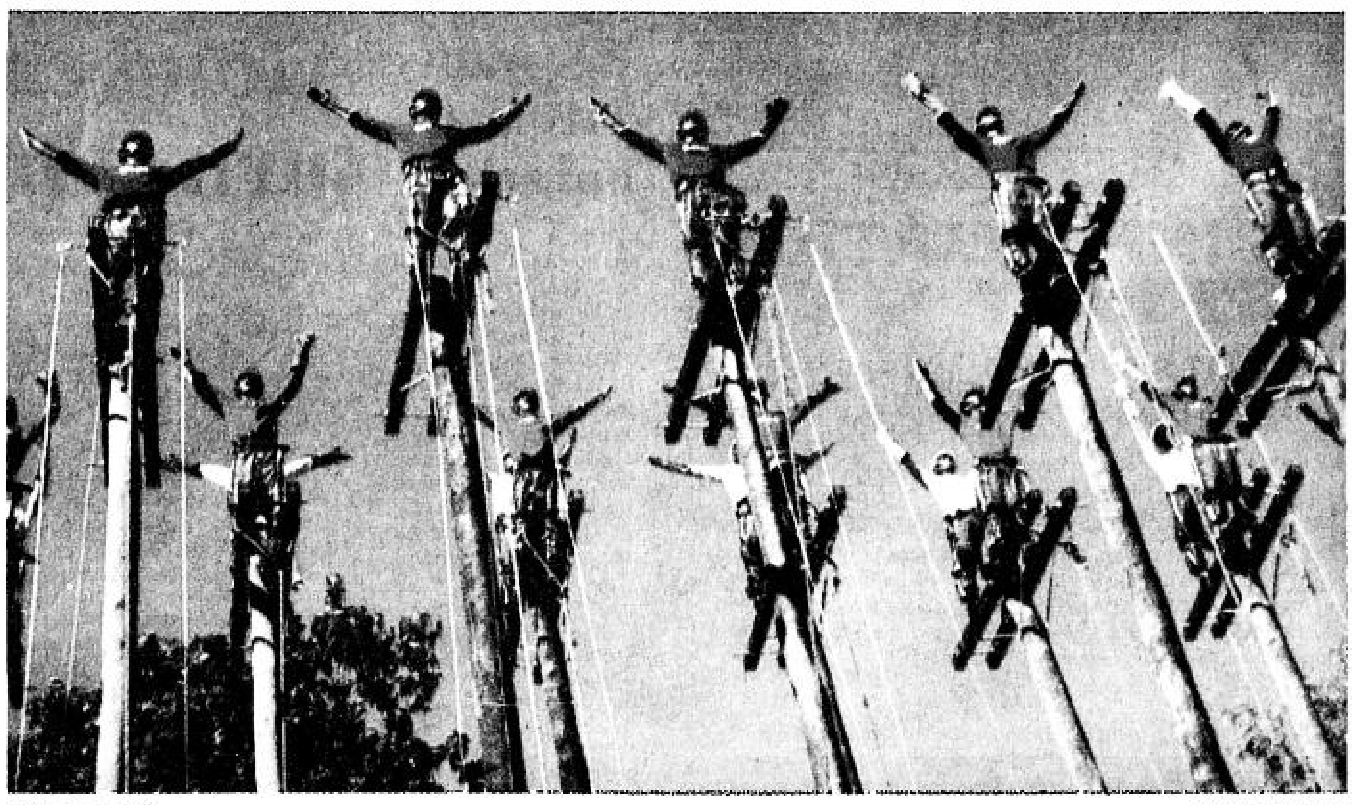
By Juliet L. Javellana

LIKE the McDonald TV commercial about Karen and Gina and how their grandfather mistook one for the other, I made an honest mistake.

But unlike the TV ad, the identity mix-up was not a gratifying mistake for all concerned. Not a blessing disguised as the senility of a caring, old man.

On Thursday, I filed a story about Lanao del Norte Rep. Abdullah Dimaporo saying that the

ERRATUM/ A16



EDWIN BACASMAS

WINNERS

Energized members of the Cebu Visayan Electric Co. Inc. star in the opening ceremonies of National Energy Week at the energy department in Fort Bonifacio, Makati as they display their skills on rodeo poles.

Oil field found in Malampaya, too

By Ronnel Domingo

THE COUNTRY may have found its first potentially commercial oil field after almost three decades, officials yesterday said.

An extended test beneath the giant Malampaya natural gas project off Palawan has yielded almost 8,000 barrels of oil per day since Sunday, the British-Dutch oil giant Shell said in a statement.

It is considered to be the highest production rate per oil well in the country since the 1970s, Shell said.

According to industry sources, the oil field has a reserve of about 17-57 million barrels of recoverable oil.

David Greer, managing director of Shell Philippines Exploration B.V., said development of the new well would be finalized "over the next couple of days once we have had a chance to evaluate the results of our initial monitoring program."

"The results of this important test

OIL/ A16

'More important than the Internet and pantyhose'

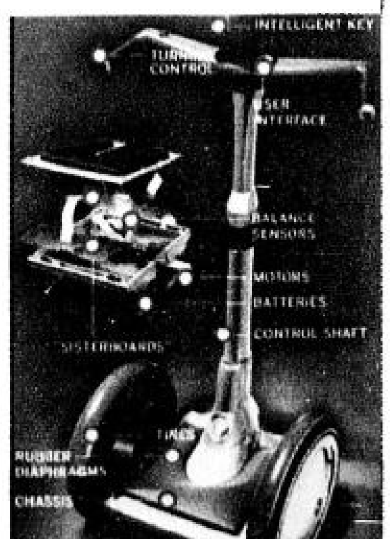
NEW YORK—Imagine, if you can, a sort of souped-up scooter with no brakes, no engine, no gears and no steering wheel, but moves its passenger by sensing and reacting to his subtle shifts in balance.

This secret invention that will purportedly banish cars from the urban landscape promises to be bigger than the Internet and so important that people will plan their cities around it. It will be unveiled to the public on Monday on American television (Monday evening, Manila time).

ABC News reported on its website that inventor Dean Kamen will appear on the network's "Good Morning America" program for the coming out of the much-hyped invention that was previously codenamed "IT" or "Ginger."

Time Magazine, in its latest edition appearing in newsstands on Monday, quotes Kamen as saying that he has named the machine Segway, and the new device will be a revolutionary

MORE/ A16



HOW the magic of the self-balancing "human transporter" works. SOURCE: SEGWAY

'WAG PALUSOTIN YAN!

'Medel was not tortured'

No evidence vs confessed killer; confession stays, cops say

By TJ Burgonio

INITIAL findings by the National Bureau of Investigation that Philip Medel Jr. bore no torture marks have made even more credible Medel's confession that he killed actress Nida Blanca and that Blanca's husband, Rod Strunk, was the mastermind, police officials said.

"The confession, which was sworn and subscribed to before a lawyer, stays," said Thompson Lantion, the head of the Directorate for Police Community Relations.

Lantion said the investigators would continue to pursue the theory that Medel was the killer.

"The focus of the investigation won't stray from Medel's confession. You can't get a confession just like that," he said, stressing that Medel had voluntarily executed his statement.

Medel's confession would form part of the evidence to be submitted to the justice department once the case is refiled, Lantion said.

Retraction

The justice department returned the case to the police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group for further investigation after Medel, claiming he had been tortured by Task Force Marsha investigators into admitting to the crime, retracted his confession.

Charges of parricide and murder against Medel, Strunk and a third missing suspect, Mike Martinez, were dropped.

The NBI has since taken over the investigation.

An NBI investigator said Medel showed no signs of torture, citing the results of a physical examination done on Nov. 23.

An NBI investigator, who asked not to be named, confirmed however that police could not get any forensic evidence to pin down Medel or Strunk.

He disclosed that DNA tests on the paring knife and the clothes that Medel allegedly used during the killing yielded nothing.

Wiped clean

"Apparently the knife had been wiped clean while the clothes had been washed before these were submitted for DNA tests," he said.

Another NBI source hinted that Medel had successfully passed a lie-detector test.

The bureau is set to formally announce the results of Medel's physical, lie detector and neuro-psychiatric examinations today.

Medel yesterday asked the NBI to include him in the government's Witness Protection Program because of alleged threats from "irresponsible" lawmen.

In a letter to NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco, Medel also gave the NBI the authority to put him under their custody.

Though he should have been released after police charges against him were dismissed, Medel has insisted on staying on at the NBI headquarters for security concerns.

At yesterday's hearing of the petition for writ of habeas corpus filed by the family of Martinez, Task Force Marsha investigators said they were so "very busy gathering evidence" none of them tried to get Martinez after Medel identified him as his contact with the mastermind.

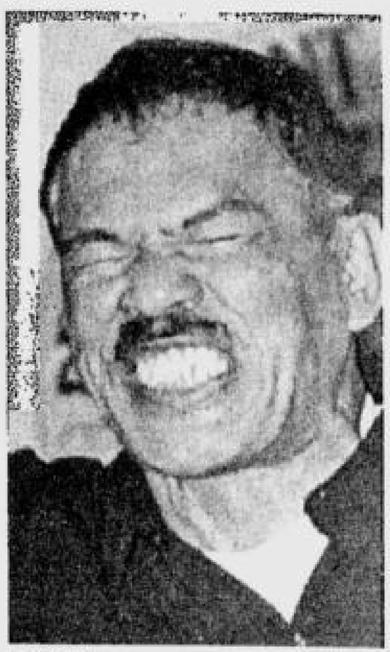
Named as respondents in the petition filed by Martinez's wife and his mother were PNP Chief Leandro Mendoza, Chief Supt. Nestorio Gualberto, Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina, and Senior Supt. Jesus Verzosa.

Abducted

.Only Espina and Verzosa appeared at the hearing.

In reply to the petition, they said Martinez, who was reportedly abducted on the morning of Nov. 19, was not in police hands.

They said the family was "barking up the wrong tree." Presiding Judge Percival Mandap Lopez of the QC Regional Trial Court Branch 78 said a subpoena has been issued to Medel to appear and testify on his claim that he had personally seen Martinez while he was detained at the CIDG office in Camp Crame. ***With reports from Philip Tubeza and Agnes Donato***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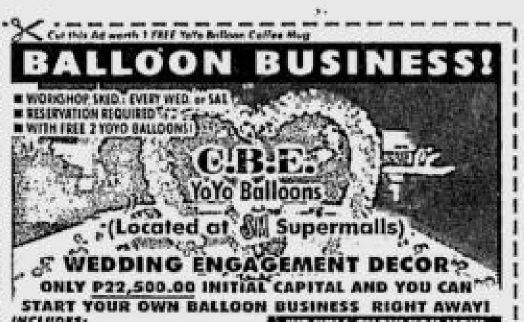

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Nur's rival is new ARMM governor

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE MAN who ousted renegade Gov. Nur Misuari from the leadership of the Moro National Liberation Front is the same one that will replace him at the helm of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Administration candidate Parouk Hussin was officially proclaimed new ARMM governor by the Commission on Elections last night following what was the "most peaceful and orderly" conduct of polls in Mindanao for years.

Hussin and his running mate Mahid Mutilan, who was also proclaimed yesterday, posted landslide victories over independent candidates Ibrahim Paglas III and Benjamin Loong, who had earlier led the vice gubernatorial race.

Hussin garnered 585,435 votes while Mutilan ran away with 549,705. Their closest rivals, Paglas and Loong had 237,868 and 247,432 votes, respectively.

"This (victory) is not so much because of me but because of the endorsement of the policies of the government," said the new ARMM governor, who was mobbed by media as soon as he stepped into the Comelec building.

"I am not exactly celebrating because I know the difficulty and the challenges of the position," he added.

Hussin, a member of the 15-man council leading the MNLF, also extended a conciliatory hand to Misuari and the rebel groups that recently attacked strategic areas of Sulu and Zamboanga, saying the government's door was not closed on them.

The new ARMM governor said he was willing to give assistance to his predecessor "if (he) reforms" and that he would initiate dialogue with Misuari's followers who continue to sow trouble in the ARMM.

The administration candidates also said they would address first and foremost the peace and order problem in Mindanao by implementing economic reforms that would truly meet the people's needs.

"Military solution is just one solution," Hussin said, although he said he would reinforce the military deployment in the ARMM to deal with the terrorist groups Abu Sayyaf.

Hussin said he had sought the help of "friends abroad" who had expressed willingness to pitch in for the improvement of the ARMM.

"The problems of Mindanao are identified. It's really just a matter of getting the resources to address the problems," he said.

"I have started sounding out to friends. These are serious problems, and we're going to need huge amount of resources because of the economic situation," he added.

Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra said Hussin and Mutilan would assume the ARMM leadership immediately even if the Organic Act creating the ARMM specifically stated that the winners should assume office in September 2002.

"That's a legal issue but unless anyone contests it, our view is that they can assume right after they are proclaimed," Borra said in an interview.

He cited Section 3 of RA 9140, which also states that the term of the incumbent shall continue until the new leaders are "duly elected and qualified," which means upon their proclamation, Borra said.

6 hostages freed

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Government forces on Sunday rescued at least six hostages, who were held since Saturday by loyal followers of Nur Misuari, after a 35-minute encounter in barangay La Paz here.

Maj. Arnel de la Vega, commander of the Army's 1st Special Forces Battalion, yesterday said one of Misuari's men was also killed during the clash.

De la Vega said the armed men were part of a larger group of rogue Moro National Liberation Front members that figured in the Cabatangan incident on Nov. 27.

KL wants Misuari out soon

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia said Monday it had yet to receive an indication from Manila on when to deport rebel leader Nur Misuari, but said it wanted the Muslim leader gone as soon as possible.

Defense Minister Najib Razak said Misuari's prolonged stay in Malaysia, where he was arrested for illegal entry on Nov. 24, might pose a threat to security.

"We have to wait for a signal from Manila on whether they are ready to receive Misuari," Najib told reporters.

"We have not heard anything, (but) we hope the sooner the better."

Military forces in the eastern state of Sabah were on high alert against possible security problems from Filipino rebels, he said.

"In view of the fact that the situation in the southern Philippines is very unstable... it is better for us to be prepared than for us to allow things to take us by surprise."

Najib said Malaysia was sufficiently equipped to deal with the possibilities of an influx of Filipino refugees and other threats posed by Misuari's supporters.

Atong can always turn state witness

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Norman Bordadora

FUGITIVES Charlie "Atong" Ang and Yolanda Ricaforte, both co-accused with ousted ex-President Joseph Estrada in the P4.1 billion plunder case, could always turn state witness, Vice President Teofisto Guingona said yesterday.

"It is possible... especially for Ricaforte because she was the auditor of then President Estrada in the *jueteng* operations," Guingona said.

"(Ricaforte) knows where they got the money and where it is now," he said.

Ang, who is fighting extradition after being arrested by US federal agents in Las Vegas on Nov. 24, has yet to receive an invitation from the government to turn state witness and testify against Estrada, his lawyer, Freddie Villamor Jr., said.

But Ang would prefer to be tried in the US than face plunder charges here, Villamor said.

"That's what his family and his lawyers want. They want him out of jail and they don't want him extradited," Villamor said.

Ang's US-based lawyer, Donald Etra, said his client would be filing a petition for bail this week.

The justice department said it will oppose all legal moves to allow Ang to post bail before a US federal district court in Las Vegas.

Justice Undersecretary Manuel A.J. Teehankee told reporters yesterday that the department would file an opposition to Ang's request for temporary liberty.

Teehankee confirmed that Etra was bent on exhausting all legal avenues to force the US federal district court to rule favorably on Ang's request for bail.

He said Ang's lawyer would probably invoke asylum as a legal defense to block extradition.

The US district court in Las Vegas started extradition proceedings against Ang based on a request from the Philippine government.

Ang is also in violation of US immigration laws as an undocumented alien as the foreign affairs department cancelled his passport after he fled the country.

His extradition hearing has been scheduled for Feb. 28 next year.

Ang fled to the US the day after Estrada was ousted in January. He was reportedly with Ricaforte.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said the US Federal Bureau of Investigation was now hunting down Ricaforte. ***With a report from Christian Esguerra***

ANG

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METROSOFT

Erap trial continues, minus Badoy

By Volt Contreras

MINUS the hospitalized Sandiganbayan Associate Justice Anacleto Badoy, the Estrada plunder trial resumed yesterday with defense lawyers allegedly citing "sins of omission" of prosecution witness Federico Pascual, former chair of the Government Service Insurance System.

In his continuing cross examination, Pascual was questioned by Estrada counsels Serafin Cuevas and Jose Flaminiano for hiding several facts from his Feb. 6 affidavit executed before the justice department. They include:

- That everything was "above-board" when GSIS bought Belle shares in October 1999 allegedly upon earlier "instruction" to Pascual by then President Joseph Estrada.
- That the alleged instruction—made by Estrada via two phone calls on Sept. 6 and Oct. 9—was, in Pascual's view, only "unusual" for the president to have done, but not necessarily illegal.

"You should have shown in your affidavit that the GSIS had not done anything wrong," Cuevas told Pascual.

"There's no word 'unusual' in your affidavit," Flaminiano said later at his turn to grill the witness.

At one point, one of the three sitting magistrates, Justice Nicodemo Ferrer, made Pascual admit that he alone felt the "pressure" from Estrada and that it did not extend to his subordinates in the GSIS, whom he instructed to study the viability of buying Belle shares.

Pascual maintained that he "volunteered" himself to the justice department after personally hearing "rumors" that GSIS and Social Security System officials were about to be implicated in the plunder case in connection with the Belle transactions.

He first heard these rumors, he said, at the "locker room" of the Ayala Alabang Golf and Country Club where he is a member, sometime late January, shortly after Estrada's ouster.

While failing to identify the persons from whom he picked up the rumors, he said he went to the DOJ in order to clear the GSIS of the allegation that Estrada earned P190 million in commissions from the purchase of Belle shares by the two state pension fund agencies.

Also yesterday, Badoy, chair of the 3rd Division which hears the historic trial, missed an Estrada plunder hearing for the first time—as he remained confined at the UERM hospital.

BADOY

In his place, Justice Teresita Leonardo de Castro presided over the hearing. Justice Narciso Nario was tapped from the 4th Division to complete the three-member bench, at least for yesterday's proceedings.

Court officials said Badoy attempted to show up for the hearing but was not permitted by his doctor. He's been at the UERM since Thursday for an asthma attack reportedly caused by heavy stress.

Badoy began to emerge as an unpopular figure among Sandiganbayan employees ever since he publicly accused one of his stenographers, Jano del Rosario, of stealing a draft ruling on the Estrada trial.

Anonymous parties put up an anti-Badoy poster in the court's elevator chiding his "cheap gimmick" of showing up at the GMA Network station in an ambulance last Thursday. The poster cried "justice" for Del Rosario.

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PCGG says coco deal dead in water

A MEETING of minds on the nature of the coco levy funds is threshed out when President Macapagal breaks bread Monday night with PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac (center, at left), flanked by DSWD Secretary Dinky Soliman and Jorge Sarmiento. The President is seated beside Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao. EDWIN BACASMAS

(From page A1)

ing," the PCGG chair said.

During the meeting, the PCGG and Malacañang agreed on two conditions for any proposed deals. First, the deal should not prejudice the government's stand to have the funds declared "public funds."

Second, the deal should benefit small coconut farmers and workers.

The proposed deal, brokered by Ang skirts the basic issue of the nature of the coco levy funds, whether they are private or public funds.

"It's good if money is immediately made available for assistance for the small coconut farmers. But a compromise agreement under any terms is not acceptable," Yorac said.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said that "if they can amend (the agreement) to meet the two conditions, the PCGG is willing to consider it."

Yorac said the PCGG would continue litigating the case even while it was searching for an "interim settlement."

Within two years

She expressed confidence that the PCGG under her leadership could get a favorable ruling over the ownership of the funds "within two years."

Before the meeting, the President said that she had not yet made up her mind on the proposed settlement. "Actually what I'm doing now is listening to the debate. So there's nothing to restudy because I haven't done an executive order," she said.

She had earlier said that she was looking for a formula to use the funds to help impoverished coconut farmers while skirting the legality of their ownership.

The settlement, signed on Oct. 28 by several farmers' groups, the Philippine Federation of Coconut Producers (Cocofed) headed by Lobregat and Cojuangco, calls for the setting up of a perpetual trust fund using P50 billion in Coconut Industry Investment Fund invested in 27 to 31 percent of San Miguel Corp. shares.

The shares in San Miguel were bought using taxes levied on coconut farmers from 1973 to 1982.

The interest earnings of the perpetual trust fund are to be used to benefit coconut farmers and the coconut industry. Under the agreement, the farmers get 40 percent of the interest earnings, the government 25 percent and Cocofed 20 percent. Fifteen percent goes back to the trust fund.

The proposed settlement still needs the approval of the PCGG, the President, the Sandiganbayan and the Supreme Court: But now, the PCGG has spoken.

In her statement, Yorac said Ang's proposal appeared "contrary to morals" because it would allow those, who amassed ill-gotten wealth, to effectively keep what they (had) plundered."

It also appeared contrary to the public policy that imposed the levy.

"The declared policy was to use the money to support impoverished coconut farmers, and not so Cojuangco could acquire San Miguel Corp. or so Lobregat and Cojuangco could take control of United Coconut Planters' Bank and other businesses they acquired with coco levy funds," Yorac said.

The PCGG issued the statement before PCGG officials went to Malacañang to present its position to the President.

Meeting with Romulo

The PCGG officials first met in the morning with Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Davao City Archbishop Fernando R. Capalla, chief presidential legal counsel Avelino Cruz, Presidential Management Staff chief Vicky Garchitorena and National Anti-Poverty Commission Secretary Teresita Quintos-Deles.

Earlier, Capalla, who witnessed the signing of the agreement in his residence, had a one-on-one meeting with Ms Macapagal.

Capalla said he invited Cojuangco, Lobregat and leaders of several farmers' groups to a dialogue because of reports that farmers in Mindanao had become desperate due to poverty. *(See related story)*

Yorac reportedly explained to Capalla that the government could not touch the sequestered coco levy assets since the Supreme Court had yet to clearly rule on the government's claim that the coco levy monies were "public funds."

After declaring the funds to be "imbued with public interest," the high court left it to the Sandiganbayan to rule on whether these are public or private. Cojuangco and Cocofed claim that the funds are private.

"But Chairman Yorac explained to Capalla that there's a new PCGG, and that the delays have been caused by over 800 motions (filed by) by Cojuangco and Cocofed," Tiglao told reporters.

He said Capalla was "very interested" in Yorac's explanation since he admitted "he has not been briefed on the fine legal points of such an agreement."

"The archbishop merely said that his concern is also the concern of the President. He's looking for ways and he's backing up attempts at how to mobilize the levy funds," the Presidential spokesperson said.

In her statement, Yorac explained that the PCGG was not against the expeditious release of the coco levy funds "so that Filipino coconut farmers may finally benefit from it." Neither is the PCGG against any compromise per se.

"For as long as the settlement is just, legal and not contrary to morals and public policy, the PCGG will support it and ask the courts to approve it," the PCGG chair said.

She said that the courts, including the Sandiganbayan, would reject any settlement contrary to law, public policy and morals.

Yorac said that based on the terms of the draft executive order that Ang, Cojuangco, Lobregat and Philippine Coconut Authority director Efren Villaseñor had proposed as a settlement of the coco levy fund case, the Sandiganbayan or the Supreme Court would reject the settlement.

"We would then be back to where we are now," she said.

"This is the reason why any proposal to settle the coco levy cases must go through the PCGG so the PCGG can advise the President on it," Yorac said.

She noted that the "statement of unity" prepared by Cojuangco, Lobregat, Ang, Gonzales and Villaseñor did not talk of the detailed terms, which the coconut farmers should have been presented with.

"These persons drafted an executive order, using yet unnamed lawyers, and sent it to the President," the PCGG chair said.

Bypassed

Yorac noted that these persons deliberately bypassed the PCGG, the Office of the Solicitor General, the executive secretary and the presidential legal counsel.

"In doing so, they disregarded the fact that Cojuangco and Lobregat are not the only parties to the cases they want to settle but include the Republic of the Philippines, represented by the PCGG, as complainant," Yorac said.

"Without the PCGG, there can be no settlement of any kind," Yorac said.

"The present terms of the compromise agreement brokered by Dante Ang for an unknown client will neither provide economic relief for millions of coconut farmers nor attain the equally important policy of recovering ill-gotten wealth from the Marcoses, Danding Cojuangco, Clara Lobregat, Juan Ponce Enrile and the Accra lawyers who helped them plunder the coco levy fund," Yorac said.

She said she could not understand why Villaseñor and Gonzales, who are both public officials, did not provide the PCGG with their proposed settlement.

The PCGG had to obtain a copy elsewhere.

Yorac said that it appeared that Villaseñor and Gonzales had secretly negotiated with Cojuangco and Lobregat in discussions apparently brokered by Ang.

Veneer of legitimacy

"They then used Bishop Capalla to give their secret agreement a veneer of legitimacy," the PCGG chair said.

"The meeting in Davao last month attended by Bishop Capalla and a few farmer leaders was simply the culmination of these secret discussions among Cojuangco, Villaseñor, Gonzales and Ang," Yorac said.

"Apparently, they misled even Bishop Capalla who, by his own admission, was made to believe that Ang was acting in behalf of the government," the PCGG statement said.

Capalla and the 10,000 farmers whose signatures appeared in a paid P3.8-million newspaper ad paid by a "benefactor" (as claimed by Villaseñor) might not have even seen or read the terms of the draft executive order prepared by unknown lawyers for Ang, Villaseñor and Gonzales, which was "strikingly similar" to the rejected EO 313 of the deposed President Joseph Estrada, Yorac said.

Yorac said Villaseñor and Gonzales, as fellow public officials, should respect the legal mandate of the PCGG and the OSG instead of undermining the commission and the solicitor general's solemn performance of their legal duties.

No authority

She said that the two had "no authority from the PCGG to negotiate on the coco levy cases."

As for Ang, the PCGG said that it was confident that the President would "carefully consider the legal, moral and policy considerations" it had raised.

Ang is not even a public official and he has refused to name the person who asked him to referee in the discussions on the coco levy settlement, according to Yorac.

Neither had he explained why he was chosen by his unknown sponsor, the PCGG chair said.

A source said that Ang had told Capalla in Davao City that he was a cousin of Ramon Ang, Cojuangco's right hand man in San Miguel Corp., who was also allegedly present during the controversial meeting.

"The Filipino people have a choice between believing a publicist paid to promote private interests, on one hand, and on the other hand, supporting a commission led by Chair Haydee Yorac that is not seriously performing its legal duty," the PCGG statement said.

Bishop says Ang came to meeting uninvited

(From page A1)

along with Mr. Cojuangco," Capalla said in a three-page statement dated Dec. 2.

Ang had earlier said that he brokered the proposed compromise deal on the coco levy funds upon the invitation of Capalla.

Capalla explained that what prompted him and the other members of the Bishops-Ulama Forum to invite Cojuangco and Ma. Clara Lobregat, Zamboanga mayor and Cocofed representative, to a dialogue "was the information from Mindanao farmers themselves that they were desperate due to grinding poverty."

"Some of them were already entertaining the use of violence a la Abu Sayyaf," he said.

Ms Macapagal did not have any knowledge about the deal, according to Capalla.

Instead, Ms Macapagal might have only known his "initiatives for dialogue" Capalla said.

"As far as I recall, her name (the President's) would be mentioned if it was in reference to an executive order," he said.

CAPALLA

ANG

Capalla said the President might have only been informed of the "salient points" of the Declaration of Unity "only after Oct. 28" or the day the deal was forged.

On that day, Cojuangco, officials of Cocofed and representatives of farmers' groups signed a proposed agreement that sought the disposition of the coco levy funds, particularly 31 percent of San Miguel Corp., representing the investment of the Coconut Industry Fund (CIIF).

Lobregat signed for Cocofed and Efren Villaseñor and Aleem Adilao for the farmers. Cojuangco and Capalla served as witnesses.

Under the agreement, an executive order (EO) will be needed to unfreeze 31 percent of the shares in San Miguel Corp. to benefit coconut farmers.

Capalla said he had announced during the signing that the agreement was only "temporary and will be formalized in Manila very soon and will be sent as a proposal to President Macapagal-Arroyo who will be requested to issue the appropriate EO."

"My last word was to say that church people like myself are in this because our role is that of a reconciler of persons and groups through a meaningful and respectful dialogue," Capalla said.

Capalla said neither was Haydee Yorac, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, "mentioned in our discussion with the farmers."

"Contrary to some newspaper reports, I did not get the impression, not even a hint, that there was some deal between Mr. Cojuangco and the President," Capalla said.

"I was only informed that the P50 billion, if released, would greatly help the economy, something that (Ms Macapagal) would be happy about," he said.

BID exec . . .

(From page A1)

President at the Senate hearing, Marcelo can kiss his telecom clearinghouse business plan goodbye.

Executives from the country's telecommunications companies trooped to Malacañang and informed Ms Macapagal that there was no need for a clearinghouse.

Marcelo's PCCI was intended to interconnect all telecommunications networks.

The executives also expressed support for the President's veto of the congressional franchise granted to Marcelo's PCCI.

Represented in the meeting called by Ms Macapagal were executives from PLDT, Smart, Extelcom, PT&T/Capwire, Globe, Bell Telecom, Paptelco, Digitel and ETPI.

Besides losing the franchise, Marcelo may be deported after a Manila regional trial court denied for lack of merit his petition seeking to stop the BID from serving a mission order on him.

In a three-page ruling dated Nov. 29 but issued yesterday, Manila RTC Branch 54 Judge Romulo Lopez said the mission order was only for verification and validation of Marcelo's citizenship, as authorized by pertinent laws.

The court said the arrest order included in the mission order dated Nov. 26 was effective only after a probable cause that may warrant his deportation had been established.

The National Bureau of Investigation said yesterday that there is "strong" evidence that Marcelo violated the country's anti-dummy laws.

"As of now, there is a strong basis that there was indeed a violation of the anti-dummy law," NBI director Reynaldo Wycoco said.

At the Senate committee on finance hearing the proposed budget of the Bureau of Immigration, Domingo apologized to Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta for the brusque behavior of her immigration agents.

Domingo acknowledged that what her men did was indeed wrong.

According to Domingo, the order was for Dizon to establish the possible violation of immigration laws by Marcelo, not to arrest the businessman.

Dizon went to the press office of the Senate where Marcelo was conducting a press conference after submitting an affidavit linking the President to the telecommunications scam.

While Dizon stressed that he was merely "inviting" Marcelo, his men, however, insisted on bringing Marcelo with them for interrogation.

The agents also waited for Marcelo at the Senate parking area and again insisted on taking him to the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID), prompting Oreta to come to his rescue.

Oreta later put Marcelo into her temporary custody on the same day to prevent a possible clash between the agents and the private bodyguards of Marcelo.

The incident also attracted the attention of some opposition senators who came to the defense of Marcelo.

Among them were Senators Aquilino Pimentel, Gregorio Honasan, Panfilo Lacson, Teresa Aquino-Oreta and Vicente Sotto.

Sen. Edgardo Angara also questioned the position of the "overzealous" Dizon as associate commissioner, which he said, was non-existent.

Traditionally, the BID has only two associate commissioners, according to Angara.

Sen. John Osmeña asked both the majority and the minority senators to stop bickering at least until January over Marcelo whom he described as an inconsequential witness.

He said that at no time in the history of the Senate had

there been so much bitterness, polarization and infighting in the Senate.

"I am very saddened by this. I wish we would put an end to this," the senator said. ***With reports from Jerome Aning, Philip Tubeza***

MOVE OVER, MISUARI JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

The winners are for the ARMM elections, Gov.-elect Parouk Hussin (right), a doctor and former MNLF guerrilla and his vice governor, Mahid Mutilan. The Comelec was set to proclaim them late Monday night. *(Story on Page A2)*

GMA rating at 'record high,' says SWS survey

(From page A1)

The total figures combined answers that she was either "very serious" or "somewhat serious" in dealing with these problems.

A total of 35 percent said she was either "hardly serious" or "not at all serious" in fighting terrorism; 38 percent, illegal drugs; and 45 percent, corruption.

The SWS said increases in her ratings were "most noteworthy" in Metro Manila, Luzon, among Class D respondents and those in the age group 18-24.

"Social class differences are now minor," the poll firm said.

Guingona et al.

The SWS also reported an improvement in the ratings of the nation's top officials and the major branches of the government.

The performance rating of Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona Jr. rose from his September rating of plus 8 to plus 12.

Senate President Franklin Drilon's net rating also improved from plus 30 to plus 39, and that of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., from plus 16 to plus 19.

The SWS said the net ratings of the key institutions likewise improved in its November survey.

"The performance of (the) National Administration rose from net plus 8 to plus 27, the Senate from plus 4 to plus 18, and the House from plus 4 to plus 15," it said, adding:

"The Supreme Court had a slight gain from plus 16 to plus 21."

The Macapagal administration's net satisfaction rating of plus 27 is the highest compared with the peak ratings earned during the administrations of Presidents Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada.

As for public opinion on Estrada, who is facing plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan, the SWS said it found "no real change."

"In November, there was 35-percent trust and 43-percent distrust in him, or (a) net trust of minus 7, or very close to his minus 9 in September and minus 5 in July," the SWS said.

William Powers, 76

A MEMORIAL Mass and novena will be held for William "Bill" Powers, a former general manager of General Electric (Philippines), on Dec. 5 at 12:15 p.m. at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati City.

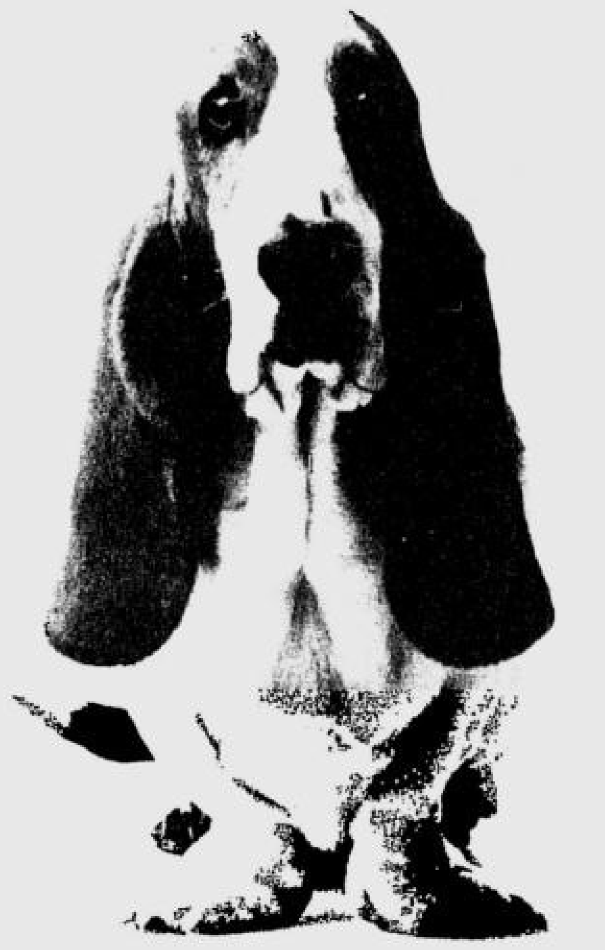
Powers, who passed away in Colorado last Nov. 30 at the age of 76, will be buried in a private ceremony at the Fairview Cemetery there also on Dec. 5.

He spent 21 years of his 32-year career in GE in the country, serving as treasurer and general manager of GE Philippines and as regional manager of Southeast Asia. Three of his four children were born here, and all were raised here.

During his long stay in the country, Powers was actively involved in the Filipino-American community. He served as president of the American Association of the Philippines and was a member of the board of directors of the American School. He was instrumental in getting a Little League Baseball program started for Filipino and American youngsters.

Powers is survived by his wife of 55 years, Marvel Ann Van Laanen Powers, his sister Patrecia Gallimore, his four children and their spouses, and his five grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Namaste Alzheimers Center at 2 Penrose Blvd., Colorado Springs CO 80906, USA.



Consumer Alert

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OPINION

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Founding Chairman

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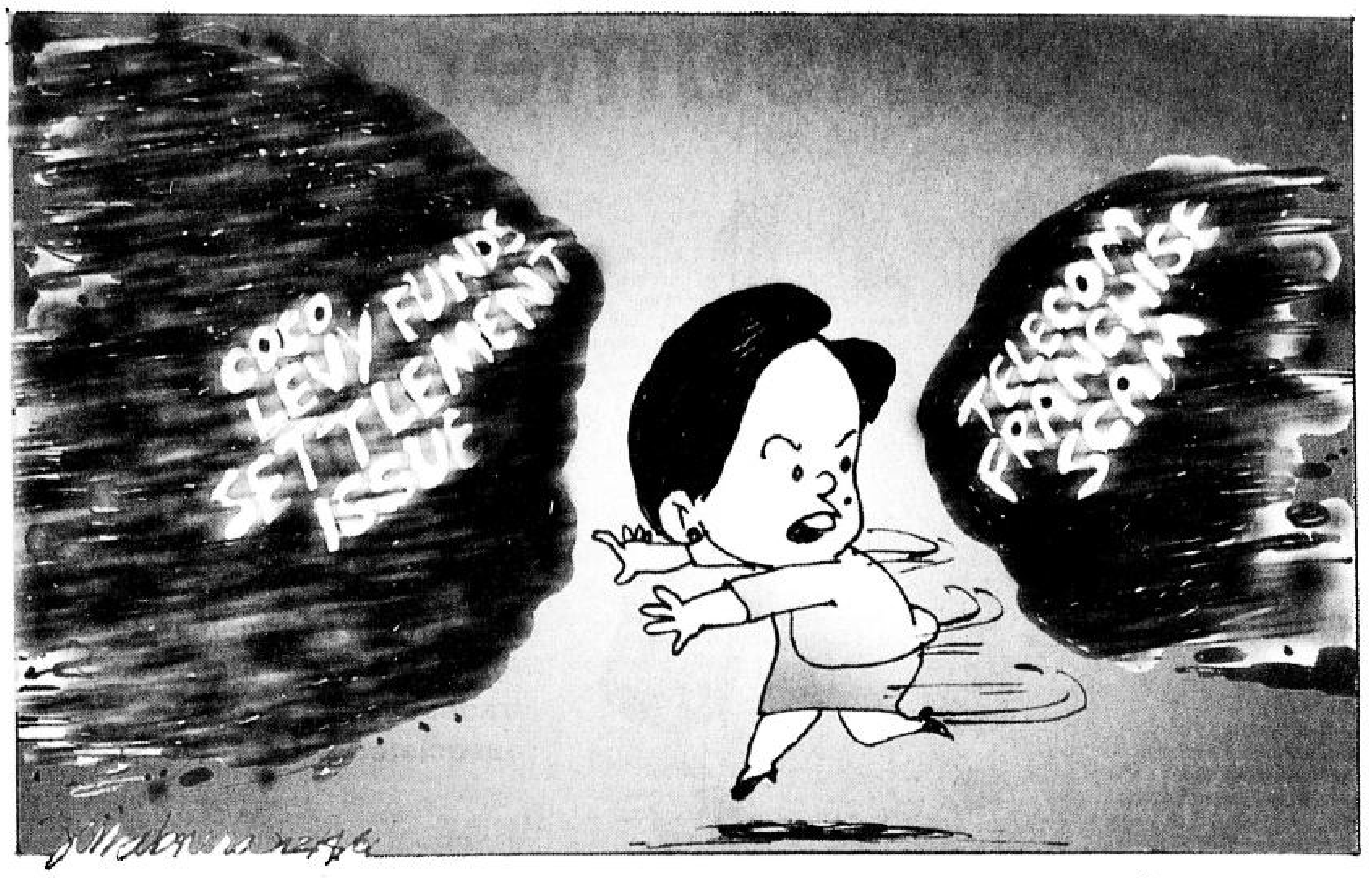
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The Beatles' legacy

EDITORIAL

THE DEATH last week of George Harrison, the Beatles' quiet lead guitarist and spiritual explorer, sets the music world and music lovers off on a nostalgia trip.

Harrison was overshadowed by the showy and egotistic John Lennon and Paul McCartney, but he had considerable talent in composition and guitar playing. He gained stature as a songwriter with the stunning "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" and "Something" which was called by Frank Sinatra the best and most moving love song ever composed.

Harrison's "My Sweet Lord," which blended melody with mantra, soon eclipsed his other compositions. One of his best known projects was the "Bangladesh" concerts designed to raise funds for famine relief in the Indian subcontinent. Anticipating later superstar benefits like Live Aid and Farm Aid, the Bangladesh concerts were later entangled in legal suits over poor bookkeeping.

The "Quiet Beatle" was at peace with his inner self. Upon his death, his family recalled that he often said, "Everything else can wait but the search for God, and love one another." Probably his music was part of his search for God.

With Harrison's death only two of the legendary Beatles remain—Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr. But the Beatles mystique lives on. The Beatles' songs will continue to be sung, played and remembered for as long as there is music in this world. A classical music critic of the London Sunday Times once called them collectively "the greatest composer since Beethoven."

Who is the person who lived in the '60s and '70s who does not remember "I Saw Her Standing There," hard rock with a great beat? Who does not remember the album, "A Hard Day's Night"? It includes "I Should Have Known Better," with its nice harmonica sound, "If I Fell," a great song, and "And I Love Her," a beautiful love song, one of the best the Beatles ever sung. It must have been the love song of many lovers at that time.

"Help," another good album, includes "You're Going to Lose that Girl," with its cool rhythm and "Strawberry Fields Forever," an awesome and hauntingly beautiful song, one of Lennon's best ever.

What is considered by many music critics the greatest Beatles album, "Abbey Road," includes "Come Together," and Harrison's "Something" and "Here Comes the Sun," a cheerful, feel-good song about the sun finally appearing after the stormy, dark winter. Probably the right song for our time when our world is going through a period of gloom and despair.

"Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" was the most talked about album of the '60s and, possibly, of all time. It was not just a pop album, but was considered a cultural icon that covered all the elements of the '60s youth culture: pop art, outlandish fashion, drugs, instant mysticism and freedom from parental control. The album has been called "the apotheosis of rock and roll, a watershed event where rock became 'serious art' without losing its sense of humor or sense of the absurd."

Then, after the aptly titled movie and album, ''Let It Be,'' the end came for the Beatles: they finally went their separate ways.

The Beatles dominated the music world of the '60s with their cheerful melodies, frolicsome personalities, their mop-topped charm and collarless gray suits. Even adults who hated rock and roll had to admit that there was substance in their music and wit in their lyrics and repartee.

Many music critics say that the Beatles can arguably be considered the top group in rock and roll history. One reviewer said:" It is inconceivable that any group in the future can shape and influence a generation in the same way these four individuals did. More than 30 years on, the quality of the songs is such that none shows sign of being either lyrically or musically dated."

David Quantick of the New Musical Express said: "The Beatles only made—they could only make—music that referred to the future. And that is the difference between them and every other pop group or singer ever since."

While the Beatles sung about drugs—for which they were criticized—they also spoke out for peace and getting involved in changing the world. During the Gulf War of 1991, representatives of countries who opposed war used Lennon's words, "Give Peace a Chance."

The Beatles revolutionized music and touched—and continue to touch—in very deep and lasting ways the lives of millions who heard them and continue to hear them in recordings, concerts and broadcasts all over the world. They may have split up, two of them may have passed on to the Great Beyond, but their great music continues to affect the lives of millions.

'Ano ba talaga, Ate Glo?'

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I DON'T understand the Macapagal administration. It wants the United States to send here Atong Ang and Yolanda Ricaforte to either testify against Erap. But it wants Pacifico Marcelo deported to the United States because he wants to testify.

Marcelo, it said, is an American citizen, so he is being deported. But no less than the press undersecretary for broadcast is an American citizen. The governor of Surigao del Norte is an American citizen. And the recently elected governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), a candidate of the administration, is a Swedish citizen. But they're not being deported.

Erap, who is a pain in the neck of the Macapagal administration, wants to go to the United States but the government doesn't want him to leave. He may not come back here anymore to face the charges against him, it said. Nur Misuari, who is a pain in the neck of the Mahathir government, is being deported here by Malaysia to stand trial for rebellion, but the Philippine government doesn't want him yet. He may become a pain in the ass of the Macapagal administration.

And the United States wants Mark Jimenez to be deported to face charges there but the Philippine government is taking its own sweet time to deport him.

Ano ba talaga, Ate Glo?

* * *

Since game shows are now very popular on television ("Who Wants to be a Millionaire" and "The Weakest Link" on Channel 13; "Family Feud," "The Price is Right" and "Wheel of Fortune" on Channel 5; "Korek na Korek Ka Diyan and "Laban o Bawi" on Channel 7; and "Game Ka Na Ba?" on Channel 2), I am starting my own game show here by asking a few questions.

Here is the first one: Who is the James Bond of the Macapagal Cabinet?

Here is the second question: Who are the four Cabinet members, called the Bond of Brothers, raising funds for the 2004 campaign? The House of Representatives has its Gang of Five but the Cabinet has its Gang of Four. It is also being called The Rubber (Robber?) Bond.

The third question: Who is the Cabinet member constructing a big house on No. 4 Encarnacion St., Magallanes Village, Makati City?

The fourth question: Who is the Cabinet member getting P1 million a month from a supplier of spare parts to one of the elevated rail transits?

The fifth question: Who is the Cabinet member who asked a P20-million advance from a contractor in exchange for fat contracts in the future? He said he needed it for his confirmation hearings.

If you get the correct answers to these questions, the Cabinet members will win hundreds of millions of pesos, but you will get nothing. They will get it all.

*Pero bago ang mga sagot, mag-be-*break *muna tayo. Huwag kayong aalis.*

* * *

If there is a battle of game shows on television, there is a battle of statues in the international airports.

A few days ago, the controversial Piatco unveiled a statue of Ninoy Aquino at the grounds of Terminal III, which is now under construction, as a public relations gimmick. The Aquino family—Former President Cory, Representative Noynoy, and daughters Viel, Ballsy and Pinky (where was Kris?)—graced the unveiling. They were all smiles in the photographs.

The smiles may be too early. Of course, Ninoy deserves a statue at Naia; after all, the airport is named after him. But the timing may not be right for a Ninoy statue on Terminal III. The project is mired in controversy. The Piatco contract faces stiff opposition for various provisions allegedly inimical to the best interests of the Filipino people for whom Ninoy died. If the charges against the Piatco contract are proven, won't the statue on Terminal III dishonor, rather than honor, Ninoy?

In the battle of statues, stakeholders in the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) in Clark, Pampanga (who are opposed to the Piatco contract) are themselves planning to erect a statue of former President Diosdado Macapagal at the former US airbase. They are doing this, they said, to honor DM (father of the present President) who, they feel, is dishonored by the provisions in the Piatco contract limiting the passenger capacity of DMIA, thus choking its development as a premier international airport.

* * *

Many non-government organizations complain that only CODE-NGO was allowed to float its own T-Notes, renamed PEACe Bonds, to raise funds. CODE-NGO raised P1.3 billion in that deal. ***Bakit sila lang? Bakit kami hindi?*** **other NGOs complained.**

You can also do it, NGOs. And it's quite easy. All you have to do is make a sister of the finance secretary the head of your organization.

Love in the time of cholerics

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I LEARNED a thing or two while I was in Zamboanga last weekend.

Ironically, the firefight between an MNLF group and the AFP in Cabatangan last Tuesday took place on the eve of Peace Week. That event has been observed yearly in Zamboanga since 1997 by Christians and Muslims during the last week of November.

One result of it was that the organizers of Peace Week ended up being in the forefront of negotiations for the release of the hostages the MNLF took with them. Which made Peace Week even more meaningful this year than in the past. Fr. Angel Calvo, head of Paz, a Christian organization, and several officers of Salam, Paz's Muslim counterpart, served as emissaries between the warring camps. The release of the hostages owed in great part to them. It did **not** owe to the Southcom, and much less to the local government of Zamboanga. If the hostages are alive and in good health, it is not because of them, it is in spite of them.

But one other, more unfortunate, result was that Peace Week was less festive this year than in the past. Certainly, it drew in a lot less people to its activities. Some streets were still ablaze with lighted candles last Friday night, but as the peace advocates would tell me ruefully, there were not as plentifully as before.

One school presentation done by a group of Christian and Muslim children brought in only a gaggle of spectators. A pity since it was a riveting skit, the kids jumbling letters to form witty messages from war to peace, from hunger to progress, while the songs of Asin blared forth from a loudspeaker. (I never realized how brilliant Asin's music and lyrics sound in the context of Mindanao.)

More to the point, people were asking what peace still had to do in a time of war. Not so very silently: That was the question asked by callers in a TV program devoted to issues of war and peace. How can peace happen when the Muslims are on the warpath?

The answer the peace advocates gave to all this was: War did not make peace a fringe issue, it made it a central one. Not least because the path of peace requires people to weigh situations more carefully rather than reduce them to black and white, to exercise more critical judgment in life-and-death situations rather than plunge headlong into a shootout. Taking the path of peace does not mean being less firm and resolute, it means being more so. Not least, it means being more firm and resolute in mind, if not in body.

The events in Cabatangan were a case in point. As several journalists would point out later in their reports and commentaries in local newspapers, the shootout between the soldiers and the MNLF need not have happened at all. If military action had only been a last resort and not a first option.

The MNLF group in Cabatangan did not attack, they were attacked. The MNLF had every right to be in Cabatangan as representatives of the ARMM: The building there is their satellite office, as contained in the peace agreement signed by Fidel Ramos and Nur Misuari in 1996. Far more importantly, the MNLF had every right to bear arms. That too is contained in the peace agreement, which is also the reason many MNLF members have become part of the AFP as "integrees."

Southcom chief Roy Cimatu would later announce that the ARMM office in Zamboanga yielded a cache of high-powered arms, which showed that Misuari's loyalists were contemplating terrorist actions. The reporters in Zamboanga at least know differently and laugh at the report. What the office yielded in fact was the usual cache of arms you find in any regular army. The ARMM is an autonomous government, it is entitled to maintain an army of its own.

Of course, a group believed to be Misuari's followers had attacked several camps in Sulu several days earlier, and Misuari himself had been declared a renegade by the national government. But why attack the ARMM office in Zamboanga even if it could be presumed to harbor only Misuari's devoted? There was no lack of options. The ARMM elections was held the day before, and the fate of ARMM's Cabatangan office could have been left to the new governor. And days before, the MNLF group were negotiating with Southcom to leave Cabatangan with their arms—which they did anyway in exchange for releasing their hostages. Why the hasty—and as some reports put it, gleeful—splendid little offensive against the ARMM office in Cabatangan?

The answers to that question are not pleasant, and offer much room for cynicism. One of them is that the city government, which means Maria Clara Lobregat, has been lusting for that office for a long time. Lobregat is officially the mayor of Zamboanga, but unofficially she is the Christian equivalent of a super Muslim chieftain. She has more power and pelf than the governor of all the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. She has been asking for the Cabatangan office, and Misuari has always refused. The result of that refusal is seen in the road leading up to the ARMM office in Cabatangan. It is the only main road in Zamboanga that is not paved. It is a big dirt road where pools of water collect in muddy craters in rainy weather and threaten to capsize rollicking jeeps.

Surprisingly, too, despite the bombs dropped by helicopters and mortar fire thrown at the enemy by the AFP's ground troops during the firefight, there was little damage to the structures in Cabatangan. One monument, a statue of an angel with the head of an eagle, was slightly damaged at the base, and bullet holes could be seen in some walls and vehicles, but that is all. One would think that the attackers took more care in preserving the integrity of the building than in keeping the bodies and [illegible] of the hostages intact.

No, the path of peace is by no means infirm. It demands more sense of realism and pragmatism than does the path of war.

Let's have a new COA coco levy report

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SEVERAL news reports say that there has never been an audit of the coconut levy funds, so that there is need for one now by the Commission on Audit. It would be good for the COA to conduct a thorough audit of the funds, worth nearly P10 billion in the early 1980s, after nearly 10 years of levy collection from the 1.4 million coco farmers, as well as millers, copra exporters and other people involved in the coconut industry, as it is now estimated to be worth about P130 billion. But to set the record straight, the funds were audited during the early years of the Aquino administration by the COA, which was then headed by Teofisto Guingona, now the vice president and foreign secretary. I recall that even then Guingona's report was already eye-popping because of its findings on how the levy funds were squandered. For instance, one project that drew its financing from the coco levy funds was the Bugsuk Island coconut hybrid experimental breeding station into which a whopping P1.2 billion—a gargantuan amount in the late 1970s—was poured. Nothing much came out of that project. A new COA investigation under its chair, Guillermo Caraguc, is certain to drive the citizens (coco)nuts.

* * *

At the well-attended 56th birthday celebration of Senate President Franklin Drilon last Wednesday evening at Club Filipino in San Juan, Metro Manila, someone quipped that never had he seen so many Cabinet members in attendance. Among those present were Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez, Energy Secretary Vince Perez, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez, Interior Secretary Jose Lina and Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas. One reason may be the fact that most of the Cabinet members' nominations still hang in the balance at the Commission on Appointments. The Senate president is ex-officio chair of the CA (the vice chair is Palawan Rep. Vicente Sandoval) and he only votes in case of a tie, but he still wields a lot of say on who passes through the CA wringer.

* * *

My husband and I attended the 40th wedding anniversary last Sunday evening of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon and his wife Monserrat. Pong, the most prominent member of PMA Class of 1961, was handsome in his tuxedo and Monchie was aflame in a red gown. There was a lot of dancing and I was happy to note that the current generation of PMA cadets are better at dancing than the older PMAyers—part of the effort to make the former more "human" and less "militaristic."

Biazon reminisced that when he and Monchie got married 40 years ago, they couldn't afford even a small reception on a second lieutenant's pay, but they promised to have a bash for their 40th. He then pulled out a little scrap of paper from his wallet, an anniversary note which Monchie sent him through a soldier in the middle of the fight to defend Camp Aguinaldo against the coup plotters on Dec. 2, 1989. It read, "I love you—nothing else matters." Biazon laughingly recalled that he was at the grandstand of Camp Aguinaldo on Dec. 1, 1989, preparing to defend it against the rebels who struck at 1:30 a.m. of Dec. 2. So engrossed was he that he completely forgot his wedding anniversary.

* * *

I queried Biazon where he stood in the current division between the majority and minority parties. He replied that while he remains with the minority, he refuses to be drawn into "partisan activities." He pointed out that a few days ago some minority senators passed around a resolution for signature, but he found it too partisan and refused to sign it. He refused to disclose what its subject was, but I suspect it's the minority's move to take away from the blue ribbon committee the investigation of Pacifico Marcelo's allegations against President Macapagal. (The minority alleged that committee chair Sen. Joker Arroyo refused to calendar it, but the latter said it has to wait as several issues were submitted ahead of it.) One thing about this tall lanky ex-soldier: it's hard to bamboozle him into doing anything he does not believe in.

* * *

Biazon said that one of the conditions he set for remaining in the opposition was that he would not support a resurrection of the "Erap issue" in the Senate and that he would favor a "critical collaboration" with the majority. He said he wanted less partisanship and strife in the chamber since the country was already suffering the consequences of too much partisanship. (As he said this, he grabbed a grandson who had curled around his neck from behind.)

He was happy about the way the recent Senate workshop at Clark organized by the Senate president went. The senators were able to focus on the hard issues ahead. "We were able to cover a lot of ground," he said.

* * *

Two things preoccupy Biazon at the moment: he wants a review of the implementation of the GATT-WTO agreement and he wants to ensure that safety nets will be in place to protect our farmers and fishermen against its full impact a few years from now. For instance, he noted that our farmers produce garlic at P37 a kilo while the landed cost from Taiwan is only P21; local chicken sells for P95 a kilo compared to P65 for the imported; and imported rice is so much cheaper than the homegrown varieties. So what will happen to our farmers? he asked.

One idea he is pushing is the expansion of the network of cooperatives in the countryside. He chairs the committee on cooperatives "which nobody wanted," and travels around the country to understand how they work. He views coops as our sure hedge against international economic turbulence.

* * *

There's an appeal for publicity from the members of the Ateneo College Glee Club of the "Reuter years," a.k.a. the Ateneo Alumni Glee Club, who are promoting their concert at the new Reuter Theater in St. Paul's College in Quezon City on Friday, Dec. 14, and Sunday, Dec. 16, at 8 p.m. The concert aims to raise funds to pay for the construction of this newly built theater named in honor of Magsaysay awardee, Fr. James B. Reuter, S.J., the driving force behind many Ateneo and St. Paul College endeavors for decades. It's a medium-sized theater with excellent acoustics, ideal for performances that don't need the size of, say, the Meralco or the Irwin Theater.

Apart from the Ateneo Alumni Glee Club whom Reuter trained in the late 1950s, the concert will feature the special participation of the St. Paul College Alumni Glee Club and 15 St. Paul sisters who will sing with the Ateneo alumni Handel's "Hallelujah" and Lucio San Pedro's "Simbang Gabi." The sisters will also sing "O Holy Night" in eight voices, led by Sr. Sarah Manapol. In addition, world-class violinist Alfonso "Coke" Bolipata will play special numbers plus obligato violin accompaniment for Santiago's "Ave Maria." Tickets are available at St. Paul's College Q.C., tel. 726-7986 to 88, and St. Paul's College Manila, tel. 523-4259.

Sorry for Sulu

AS a youth leader in the trouble-stricken province of Sulu, I could not help but feel disheartened when I learned about the attack launched recently by Moro National Liberation Front rebels in the town of Jolo.

When I learned about it, I immediately called up my mom in Jolo to tell her that everything in Manila was okay, and that I was doing fine.

YOUNGBLOOD

Elle O. Fernandez

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

When my sister got on the line, she told me that people living in the outskirts of Jolo were flocking to the town center to seek refuge. She and my mom had been planning to go to Zamboanga City, but they had to cancel their trip almost as soon as they heard the sound of mortar and high-powered firearms being fired just outside the town. Soon they could hear the cries of pain of the wounded. War was again raging in my hometown.

Jolo was once a beautiful, peaceful and progressive town. Trade was booming and people from all walks of life were happy. My parents told me they used to watch movies up to the wee hours of morning.

Then on Feb. 4, 1974, Nur Misuari and the MNLF attacked Jolo, signaling the start of their rebellion against the government. Jolo was razed to the ground. And it was never the same again.

Since then, political leaders have come and gone. They grew wealthy but they never addressed seriously the poverty among the majority of their constituents. Illiteracy increased. Deep-seated biases and prejudices among Muslims and Christians were reinforced.

Soldiers committed various human rights violations. They picked up Tausugs and killed them, quite often for no reason at all.

The Tausugs have been fighting back. This is why up to now you hear of soldiers being killed in broad daylight on the streets of Jolo. Tausugs demand an eye for an eye. Not even cats are spared.

Then the Abu Sayyaf came, aggravating the problem of peace and order in Sulu. When the government declared an all-out war against them, the Suluhanons were plunged further into violence and poverty.

The creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao initially made the Suluhanons proud of their leader, Nur Misuari, for forging what they thought would be a lasting peace with the government.

But their hopes of peace and progress proved to be short-lived. Teachers and government workers began complaining about delays in the payment of their salaries. Needed roads remained unconstructed while those that were in existence were hardly repaired. Soon the Tausugs began asking, "What good has the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao brought us?"

The recent attack in Jolo made my heart bleed. How can Misuari ask his own people to risk their lives to promote his own selfish interests?

There are many things wrong with the ARMM. For example, the people are not consulted about government projects and policies, much less are they asked to participate in them. The youth in Sulu hardly have any rights.

I left my hometown and decided to work in Manila, not because I dreaded the place, but because I had given up hope that peace had a chance. I felt so helpless in spite of the existing Peace Center. I could not reach out because of the people's resistance to change.

But who can blame them? Tausugs are known to be warriors. We are the only ethnic group who were not colonized by the Americans. Neither did Spain or Japan succeed in doing so.

We can be very proud of our legacy. Out leaders are supposed to carry this on, but they failed to deliver.

As I write this I worry about the helplessness of my fellow Tausugs who are trapped in a war that has no reason. Unfortunate civilians are caught in crossfire, including the youth that I am trying to mold into peace advocates. I pity the children traumatized by the sounds of OV10, cannons, mortars, and automatic weapons and the evacuees from other municipalities, who remain unattended.

I could not help but shed tears when I learned of what happened that bloody Monday. Some rebels entered houses and asked for food without harming the residents. Their only objective was to overrun the military camp in Jolo. Some of them were armed with nothing but a spear gun used for fishing. How can a leader be so heartless as to use his men as cannon fodder? I pity those who were killed during the fighting. Some of those who were killed had no idea what an Army brigade could do.

Last Nov. 26 the elections were held for new ARMM officials. We had the opportunity to choose another leader who would serve us. I had no heart to ask the people to vote for a leader who was sincere. Instead I am now appealing to those who won to look into their hearts and spare us from the selfishness of our previous leaders.

Secession is not the answer to our poverty. Neither is it revolution. Sulu's problems will only be solved if there is a change in attitude among our leaders.

Let us give peace a chance in Sulu. The government should be sincere in delivering basic goods and services. Other Filipinos should realize that the Tausugs are a proud and dignified people they should understand that the conflict parts of Mindanao is the product of centuries of neglect by the national government and mismanagement by our own leaders.

The Tausug people, Muslim and Christian alike, join hands and work together to save Sulu and make a community there they can live happily and peacefully.

Elle O. Fernandez, 28, is a Tausug peace activist who works as a researcher for a nongovernment organization based in Manila.

Common and 'routine'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

A WOMAN doctor's account of a week spent in rotation in the delivery room of a government hospital came out in the "Letters" section of this paper yesterday. Our Opinion editor entitled it "Rudeness and cruelty in delivery room."

While her stories of how the doctors treated the patients—poor, underprivileged women for the most part—weren't anything new, what made the letter forlorn reading for me was precisely how familiar and "common" they were. So often have we heard stories of how doctors and nurses treat "charity" cases that they have ceased to amaze, shock or raise concern. Indeed, we have even taken to laughing at jokes poked at these mothers. How, for instance, a woman in the throes of delivery would howl and scream and curse the father of the child, swearing never to allow him near her again, only to show up, almost nine months after to the dot, ready to deliver yet another child.

The reality goes beyond the anecdotal. Just last week, at a presentation of studies on women's health called "Women's Voices in Health Care," two researchers based in Cagayan de Oro bared the results of their observations of and interviews with both patients and medical caregivers in government hospitals in the city. Among the findings of Magdalena Cabaraban and Sharon Linog was that "scolding" was accepted by the patients as "normal," part of the "price" of receiving charity or free care. "Patient reactions cover a wide array of emotional behavior," the authors note. "There are those who ignore or are indifferent to the doctor's scolding; others retaliate by shouting or hurling insulting worlds but, most often, a great number cry or are apologetic."

But even when summoning the gumption to respond in kind to "insults," patients observe a kind of hierarchical protocol. "Patient shouting and insulting occur most often with nurses rather than doctors," observe Cabaraban and Linog.

* * *

THEIR findings are borne out in another study on "Women's Experiences in and Perceptions of Community-based Reproductive Health Service," of the Women's Health Care Foundation.

What factors influence women's choice of health caregivers and their willingness to visit health care centers, clinics or hospitals to meet their healthcare needs?

One of the findings, from focused group discussions in two urban poor communities in Metro Manila, was that "the basic need for affirmation, self-esteem and respect are determinants to health-seeking behaviors of women in all ages." In other words, the women didn't care how competent a doctor or nurse was—or at least it wasn't their only concern. What mattered more to them was how they were treated, whether they felt respected and care for at the hands of the caregiver. Poor patients, the study found, are willing to tolerate poorly equipped centers or even unsanitary conditions. But they choose to stay away from medical personnel, however great the risk to their health or lives, who make it a habit to shout at them, treat them brusquely and insult their persons. And judging from the results of the studies, as well as the *doktora's* letter, rude and impersonal health care providers seem to be more the rule than the exception.

* * *

ANOTHER matter for concern was how, according to Cabaraban and Linog, "patients who suffered life-threatening complications due to induced abortion were treated with contempt and were given delayed ministration intentionally." In contrast, women who suffered spontaneous abortion, or miscarriage, "got immediate attention and (were) treated with compassion."

The treatment of women rushed to hospitals due to complications from a botched abortion is not news, of course. The stigma against abortion and the women who undergo the procedure (but why not the men who cause the unwanted pregnancy?) has, it seems, given rise to hostility from the medical establishment, who are—or should be—in the "caring" profession.

Not only is the rudeness and contempt emotionally and psychologically damaging, it has major implications on the women's health and survival. Septic abortions are emergency cases, and immediate medical attention is necessary before the infection sets in, spreads widely and endangers the life of the woman. Deliberately delaying treatment amounts to gross negligence, if not cruelty and murder.

* * *

THE PICTURE painted by both studies, only two of several researches sponsored by Reprocen, the Reproductive Health, Rights and Ethics Center for Studies and Training of the UP, is of a health care system bedeviled by poverty, inefficiency and public indifference.

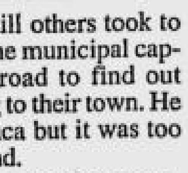
Due to the serious lack of hospital beds in maternity wards of public hospitals, for instance, the staff resort to such measures as pushing two beds together to accommodate three (or more) patients lying crosswise. The heavy workload of doctors and nurses also prevents them from giving patients all the information they need regarding the procedures and treatment, and may often lead to short-tempered dealings and rude exchanges. On the average, a nurse in a government hospital here has to attend to 30 patients a day. In a country like Australia, on the other hand, the average ratio is one nurse to four or five patients.

Given the poor health infrastructure, though, "rudeness and cruelty" on the part of health care professionals would only seem to compound the hardship and pain that patients seek relief from. The poor, used to a lifetime at the bottom of the social, economic and political pecking order, don't demand much or aspire for anything more than the basics needed for survival. But they don't need to have their faces ground into the muck of their poverty and desperation, their character maligned and their persons belittled.

As the anonymous doctor wrote: "We (doctors) have economic and political power over our indigent patients. We are educated. The institution is behind us. We know this. The patients know this. They look up to us. Do we need to look down on them?"

An encounter with the generalissimo

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY



Bambi L. Harper

FRAY Tomas Espejo of the Augustinian order was in Taguig in 1897 and wrote about the memorable encounter he had with Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo and his troops who were reconnoitering the towns along Laguna de Bay. Prior to this, residents of the area had been reporting seeing large parties of strangers armed with bolos but the rumors were repeated so often no one gave them credit anymore.

Early in the morning of New Years' Day, the news spread again of numerous armed men in the mountains and Fray Espejo, feeling a certain disquiet in the neighborhood, requested the municipal captain to send someone to the mountains to ascertain the truth and assuage people's doubts. He also took the precaution of sending word to the lieutenant of the Guardia Civil in Pasig, informing him of other rumors but omitted the latest one because the sentry had returned and said he had seen nothing.

Fray Espejo sought to maintain an outward tranquility so as not to alarm the parishioners, but his disquiet continued though he couldn't quite explain the reason. He thought perhaps it was due to the irritating insistence of the rumors even if nothing came of them.

Later at three in the afternoon, the mayor came to tell Espejo and Corcuera that, yes, the rumors were true. The mayor's brother had seen them and a *carromata* had been stopped by men armed with long bolos. Fray Espejo immediately sent a second notice to Pasig, begging the lieutenant of the Guardia Civil to send whatever force he could because the town was unguarded.

Both priests did not take the *carromata* to Pasig because Fray Espejo thought they could still take the banca to Guadalupe. But 15 minutes after sending the message to Pasig, they heard fired that, he later learned, wounded the sentry in the leg.

Upon hearing the shots, the people became agitated and ran in every direction, taking refuge in houses with ground floors of stone, others in the church and convent, and still others took to the hills. Fray Espejo advised the municipal captain to place sentries on the road to find out whether the rebels were coming to their town. He also asked them look for a banca but it was too late. No oarsmen could be found.

Shortly the sentries returned running to announce that the rebels were approaching at a steady pace. The priests immediately ordered the doors of the convent and church locked and, armed with a rifle and a revolver, they climbed up the belfry accompanied by the servants and various residents who had taken refuge in the convent. From the tower, they saw the desolation of the town, heard the shouts of mothers dragging their confused children who didn't know where to hide and residents who were running hither and thither not knowing where to take refuge.

At that same moment the first group of rebels arrived. They seemed to be peaceful. As soon as they saw the group in the tower, they told them to remain calm and hastened to assure them that no one would molest them, that their chief, General Aguinaldo, ordered that they be respectful and not cause anyone any harm.

Sensational reports from the press of assassinations, whispered conversations referring to crimes that made their hair stand on end convinced them that a similar fate awaited them since the friars were not exactly winning any popularity contests in those days.

Fray Espejo warned his companion, Fray Corcuera, not to shoot so long as they were not attacked and if it became necessary to do so to wait until the enemy was two meters away.

The first group reassured them, but the second group that arrived demanded that they turn over their arms. The residents with them answered that there were no arms because they had been sent to Pasig on orders of the Guardia Civil. The group seemed to accept the answer, but another group arrived and again asked for the rifle and the revolver. Again the residents answered that they had no such arms and the group left unhappy with the reply and muttering under their breath.

Then still another group arrived and demanded that they turn over the rifle and the revolver on orders of General Aguinaldo. It was no longer possible to deny them so Fray Espejo went to the railing of the azotea to tell them that, yes, the arms would be turned over but only to their generalissimo.

Two young boys returned with the message that the generalissimo was giving his word that they would not be harmed but they had turn over the arms to the chief who would arrived promptly and then no one would bother them further. Finally, two colonels came, took the arms and left. Fray Espejo requested them to ask General Aguinaldo to pass by the convent so that they could meet each other.

Upon their arrival, the rebels built trenches along strategic passages. Some groups went to barrio Malapat na Bato to block the path to the Pasig River and strengthen their position, taking advantage of the natural terrain, while others went to barrio San Joaquin on the left bank to intercept any Pasig forces coming to the aid of Taguig.

All afternoon they heard shots, first from Taguig and later from San Joaquin and finally from Malapat na Bato. But the rebels, despite the shooting, walked calmly through the streets and told the residents to help them dig trenches.

The fathers and their parishioners said their prayers, convinced there was no mortal help left.

(Data from "Apuntes Historicos de la Provincia Agustiniana") **To be continued.**

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . .?

Paco fire tragedy

A TOTAL of 28 people, 23 of them children, died when fire razed the Settlement House run by the Asociacion de Damas de Filipinas, in Paco, Manila, on Dec. 3, 1998. There were more than 70 people in the orphanage when the fire broke out around 1 a.m.

The compound, whose earliest structure was built in 1913, included a three-story main building, a nursery and two cottages for orphans and staff. Working parents in the neighborhood left their children in the compound when they went to work.

According to the National Bureau of Investigation, the fire was caused by an overheated electric fan. The fan, which was found inside the room where the fire started, showed signs of an explosion. The NBI report also said the firefighting equipment was inadequate and the buildings had no fire exits.

Only eight bodies were identified at the time when the mass burial was held on Dec. 8, 1998. A 500-square-meter lot at the North Cemetery in Manila served as the final resting place for the charred bodies of the children, aged seven years old and below, and the five adults. The youngest fatality was a six-month-old baby.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, two other city officials and 16 officers of Damas de Filipinas were charged with graft before the Office of the Ombudsman. Parents and guardians of the victims, with the help of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, filed the complaint on Aug. 9, 1999. Among the Damas de Filipinas officers charged were Atienza's wife, Evelina; chair Aurora Reciña of the Commission on Human Rights; and Court of Appeals Justice Corona Somera. Aside from graft, they were also charged with violations of the building and fire codes.

Case status: After more than three years, the Ombudsman has yet to resolve the complaint. Meanwhile, UP forensic experts identified the body of one-year-old John Isaiah Balasabas through DNA testing last September. The UP team is still trying to identify remaining 19 bodies, but it needs additional funds to proceed.

—Armin P. Adina, PDI Research Department

Violating the Montreal Protocol

LETTERS

THANKS to the column of Neal H. Cruz last Nov. 27, we now know that former Environmental Management Bureau director Peter Anthony Abaya legitimized the smuggling of ozone-depleting substances (ODS), particularly chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

Knowing fully well the extent of illegal smuggling of ODS, as Abaya claims in his letter to Cruz, he should have exposed and prosecuted these illegal importers because it is the policy of the state to condemn illegal acts and not to condone them.

Abaya instead favored eight new firms that were previously not involved in ODS importation and gave them permits. To cover up for this scheme, he inserted a footnote in a Department of Environment and Natural Resources Administrative Order which supposedly gives an additional 75-percent allowance for the country's annual ODS import quota.

What he did, he said, was "merely to legitimize the smuggling by including them in the legal imports…"

One wonders how Abaya came up with the 75 percent figure used as the standard fixed rate for smuggled ODS because there is no data available and no survey done on the extent of ODS smuggling in the country.

Altering the Country Program for ODS requires consultation with the Montreal Protocol desk in Canada and with importers and end-users.

The importation had to be processed by the DENR's Philippine Ozone Desk (POD), paid for by the World Bank funds. But this was not done. In fact, two of the importers were given their licenses two days after they applied for permits.

One kilo of CFC is worth about $1.20 but it can be sold for up to $6 when imported. This showed that the new importers, who were licensed to import up to 1,330.43 metric tons by Abaya, earned tremendous profits to the detriment of our people and environment.

Contrary to Abaya's claim, an EMB director has no unilateral authority to increase or decrease standards or import quotas in our country commitment. Doing so is outright criminal because it violates the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer which calls for a total ban on the manufacture and use of ODS by year 2010.

The World Bank and the Swedish government have warned the Philippines on the excessive importation last year of CFC in gross violation of its international commitment.

According to the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), a government partner in the ODS program which acts on behalf of the Swedish government, the Philippines has a "legal obligation" under the Montreal Protocol to reduce CFC consumption by 50 percent by Jan. 1, 2005, and 85 percent by Jan. 1, 2007.

By increasing the importation quota by 75 percent, the Philippines, would have a hard time meeting the phase-out program by year 2010, they warned.

WB environmental specialist Vraj Vithoolien, who was here recently on a World Bank mission on the ODS program, said "inserting a footnote increasing the import quota by 75 percent is in violation of the Montreal Protocol."

Meanwhile, SEI's Annica Carlsson, ozone project director for the Philippines said there was no additional market created for CFC because all efforts are directed toward complete phaseout by 2010.

For his part, SEI ozone project consultant Klas Berglof, who prepared the Refrigerant Management Plan for the Philippines, said they were not consulted on the insertion of the footnote.

Increasing the importation of banned ODS is very serious because it affects the ozone layer, reducing the protection of humans, animals and plants against ultraviolet (UV) radiation which affects the human immune system and causes skin cancer and cataract. It also slows the production of phytoplankton, a primary food source of fish larvae and fingerlings.—**JULIAN D. AMADOR, director, Environmental Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City**

North Expressway expansion done by 2004

THIS refers to the column item of Mr. Al S. Mendoza, entitled "Woe to North Luzon Expressway users," last Nov. 29.

The Manila North Tollways Corporation (MNTC) of the Lopez Group, wishes to correct the impression of Mendoza on the status of the project, known as the North Luzon Tollway Project which calls for the rehabilitation and expansion of the existing North Luzon Expressway (NLE), to wit:

1. The MNTC has not abandoned the project, nor has it postponed the rehabilitation program for three years.

The financial closing in July 2001 for the $261-million limited resource finance package with seven international banks and five multilateral financial institutions, led by the Asian Development Bank, has moved the MNTC closer to issuing a construction notice to proceed (CNTP) to the Australian contractor, Leighton Contractors Asia Ltd. by the first quarter of 2002.

The period of construction will take 24 months after which the MNTC, through an operation and maintenance company, takes over commercial operations of the toll road beginning 2004 from the Philippine National Construction Corp., an equity partner under a joint venture agreement concluded in July 1995. First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp., the infrastructure arm of the Lopez Group, owns 64 percent of MNTC.

2. The reckoning period for income tax holiday (ITH) has been moved to 2004.

The MNTC is in receipt of an official communication from the management committee of the Board of Investments (BOI) stating that during its Oct. 16, 2001 meeting, it approved the request of the MNTC for an amendment to the project timetable and movement of reckoning period for the income tax holiday (ITH) of Phase 1 of the North Luzon Tollway Project from 2001 to 2004 primarily because of the delay in the delivery of right-of-way acquisition by the government.

The MNTC, meanwhile, is working to satisfy all the conditions of the lenders to facilitate full-blast construction work at the North Luzon Expressway in time to deliver a world-class toll road by early 2004.—**ANGELO S. SAMBO, manager, External Relations and Marketing, Manila North Tollways Corp., Suite 501, East Tower, PSE Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City**

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The youth bulge

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

WE usually associate population growth with babies, forgetting that these cute and cuddly creatures eventually become adolescents and young adults, who are not so cute and certainly have many more problems, needs and, yes, don't we know those demands?

To give you an idea of the scale of what we're dealing with, there are about 16 million young adult Filipinos, that is, those aged 15 to 24. That's up from about 5 million back in 1965.

At a conference last week on "Asian Youth at Risk," Peter Xenos of the University of Hawaii's East-West Center presented a paper on this "youth bulge." Xenos did not cite the Philippines in particular, but when I got a more detailed version of his paper and studied his tables, I realized how important it was for Filipinos to respond to this important aspect of population growth.

The number of young adults has not always been that large. Until the middle of the 20th century, most countries in the world still had very high child mortality rates, which meant that fewer survivors reached young adulthood. This changed after the World War II, when advances in health care allowed more children to survive into adolescence and young adulthood. These young adults, in turn, produced more children, contributing to the youth bulge.

Starting in the 1960s, the age composition of the population began to change again. Economic development and greater access to education had led to a later age for marriage and couples choosing to have fewer children. National governments responded with strong family planning services.

As a result, the youth bulge peaked in several countries, and then began to decline. This happened in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan by 1980, and in Thailand and Indonesia by 2000. It is not surprising these countries were also Asia's economic tigers: the decline of the youth bulge freed resources at household, community and national government levels and helped spur economic development.

There were exceptions, and the Philippines provides the most dramatic example. Although we were one of the first countries in the world to set up national family planning programs, corruption, pressure from the Catholic bishops and political flip-flopping have weakened our family planning programs. As a result, our young adult population continues to increase in absolute numbers and will reach its peak only around 2025.

What does this all mean? As a teacher, I am most concerned about the strain on the educational system. I have seen high schools with up to 60,000 students divided into more than 20 sections per year. I have seen high school and college libraries with fewer books than the non-government organization I work with. I worry not just about the lack of supplies and facilities but about the overworked staff, who need to respond not just to teaching responsibilities but also to guidance, special tutoring, counseling, advice on careers and jobs.

That's the situation for more fortunate young Filipinos who are still able to stay in school. There are, too, the growing number of jobless, out-of-school youth, always the last to be hired, the first to be fired. For them, there's nothing in terms of economic or social support. Should it be surprising that so many start early with childbearing and marriage?

We have to be realistic and face up to the fact that even if we try to recover lost time now by strengthening family planning programs, we will still have to respond to the existing youth bulge up to the year 2025. The alternative is even worse: if we don't start getting serious about family planning, the youth bulge could well extend beyond 2025. That's four more presidents (three if Ate Gloria wins in 2004).

Slowing down the youth bulge will involve more than family planning and sex education. Young adult surveys throughout the region, including the Philippines, are unequivocal in showing that early pregnancy and marriage can be prevented (not totally but very significantly) for as long as young girls are able to stay in school. Some of the data coming out of surveys also show that employment of young adult females has a "protective" effect in terms of preventing early marriage and pregnancies.

Unfortunately, we seem to be more interested in keeping the young mainly as consumers. We spend billions for advertising of youth-oriented commodities and hardly anything for scholarships to keep the young in school, or for generating more job opportunities.

It's not just schools and jobs that we lack. I have visited many countries poorer than we are but find that their governments and the private sector seem to spend more for libraries, sports facilities, even dance halls, all these catering to the young.

The problems of supporting our young adults reverberate throughout society, sometimes in ironic ways. Precisely because birth rates are so low in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, even middle-class parents in these countries are willing and able to provide the best for their children, and that includes hiring Filipinas to help with domestic chores. That creates jobs for Filipinos, but at the cost of the families they left behind.

Lately, too, I hear arguments claiming that it is better to have a young population rather than a "gray" one, as has happened in countries with strong family planning programs. The anti-family planning groups say there's no one to care for the aged in those countries and that this becomes our advantage because we can then send Filipinos out to work in these countries' geriatric homes and centers.

Sure. First we sacrifice our young by sending their parents overseas. Then we ship out our young to care for other people's aged. Who then, may I ask, ends up caring for Filipinos?

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

They deserve thanks, not condemnation

BISHOP Fernando Capalla and Dante Ang deserve our thanks and gratitude for going out of their way to help the warring leaders of various coconut farmers' organizations come to an agreement.

The coco levy funds could not have been sequestered for so long had the leaders of the coconut farmers been able to raise their eyes over and above their own personal interest.

The compromise settlement of the coco levy funds, as proposed by the two distinguished personalities, will not in any manner affect the respective position of the warring leaders.

Pending final determination by the courts on the true nature of the levy funds, a trust fund will be set up so that the earnings of the levy funds could be used to develop the coconut industry with the coconut farmers as participants and beneficiaries.

The determination of whether the coco levy fund is public or private is a prejudicial issue, hence the principal amount of the levy funds cannot be touched. Even if the farmers have agreed that the levy funds are private, the government through the PCGG is claiming that the levy funds are public since it was collected as a tax or levy.

If in the end the coco levy is declared a public fund, then the money will automatically revert to the national coffers and can only be disbursed through an appropriation measure passed by Congress. If the levy fund is declared a private fund, then the farmers' organizations can agree among themselves on the disposition of the funds.

The opposition of the Presidential Commission on Good Government to the compromise settlement is clearly motivated by no other purpose than to hold on to the control of the levy funds which have been misused by PCGG officials for the last 15 years. A protracted legal battle would mean continued happiness for the PCGG officials while the coconut farmers continue to wallow in grinding poverty.

I do not see how President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will profit from the coco levy deal. Even Eduardo Cojuangco is not directly benefited by this temporary settlement of the levy controversy. The coco deal could not even be called a settlement since it is merely a palliative to ease the present economic difficulties of the coconut farmers.

Instead of condemning Bishop Capalla and Ang, they both deserved a pat on the back.—**JOSE T. MARCHAN, president, Coco-Industry Rationalization Movement Inc., 3rd floor, Nena Samio Building, Paco**

The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

US to Taliban: Surrender or die

KABUL—Afghanistan's die-hard Taliban forces were on US notice Monday to surrender or die as the Americans and their Afghan allies geared to flush the Islamic militia out of their last major bastion.

With US warplanes pounding the southern city of Kandahar day and night and local tribal fighters closing in on the airport, a US Marine spokesperson said the "culmination" of the campaign appeared to be nearing.

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld signaled a potentially key role for US forces around Kandahar where he said the Taliban outnumbered their local foes and included hard-nosed Pakistani, Arab, Chechen and Chinese fighters.

"It will take some reinforcements, it will take some assistance from the air," Rumsfeld said on US television Sunday.

He did not comment on the possibility of US ground troops taking part in a push but said the conflict was entering a dangerous phase and suggested that American troops could be killed or captured.

"The noose is tightening (around the Taliban) but the remaining task is a particularly dirty and unpleasant one," Rumsfeld said, adding of the Islamic militia: "If they don't surrender they will be killed."

US officials said there were 1,500-2,000 American troops in Afghanistan, including more than 1,000 Marines at a desert airstrip south of Kandahar where they nearly doubled their fleet of combat helicopters Sunday.

Major James Higgings, a Marine intelligence officer, said the Taliban were still in control of Kandahar, their spiritual home, but the push to capture the city "seems to be reaching a culmination point of some type."

"You have a lot of forces at play—opposition groups coming from the north down, from the southeast up, and us coming potentially from where we are," he said.

Anti-Taliban forces of the former governor of Kandahar province Gul Agha claimed Sunday to be moving in on Kandahar airport, killing 12 Arab fighters during a fierce battle.

An aide to the ex-governor said at least 11 other Taliban fighters had been wounded in the firefight at Urgustan bridge, about three kilometers from the airfield.

The aide, Abdul Jabbar, said that three key Taliban bunkers near the airport had been destroyed by US bombs. He said the forces of Gul Agha, one of two Pashtun tribal elders opposing the Taliban in the south, would move on the airport itself "very soon."

AFP

Afghan factions move closer to an agreement

BONN—The first concrete signs of a post-Taliban power-sharing deal began to emerge Monday, as Afghanistan's Northern Alliance said it would accept a rival from the royalist camp as head of an interim government.

But despite signs of a will to share power, the UN said its draft accord had been subject to a number of proposed amendments by the rival Afghan elements meeting here—meaning a final agreement on filling Afghanistan's political vacuum was unlikely to be struck before Tuesday.

"The quota to head the interim administration is theirs," Northern Alliance foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah told AFP by telephone from the Afghan capital Kabul, referring to the camp of the Rome-based former king Mohammad Zahir Shah.

He said the Alliance—a grouping of rival warlords who have profited from US attacks to seize Kabul and much of the country—would hold onto the key defense ministry "to avoid any immediate breakdown of law and order."

In Bonn, the royals said their mild-mannered, ethnic-Uzbek chief negotiator Abdul Sattar Sirat had been put forward for the post of prime minister of an interim Cabinet, designed to rule the war-torn country for a six-month period.

Sirat served as the king's justice minister until a coup sent him and the monarchy into exile in 1973, and is not considered a political heavyweight.

Western diplomatic sources said only the ex-king's delegation—one of four groups at the rollercoaster talks here—had yet to present its list of names, adding discussions were still bogged down with examining a UN draft accord.

That seven-page blueprint is the second to be unveiled by the UN since the talks opened last Tuesday.

It provides for a six-month 28-member interim government Cabinet, a supreme court and a 21-member independent commission to organize the convening of an emergency Loya Jirga—a traditional grand assembly of tribal elders.

According to the draft, the 87-year-old ex-king would play an honorary and symbolic role as president of the Loya Jirga, which would pave the way for a two-year transitional government, a Constitution and, eventually, a broad-based government.

Although off the Afghan scene for 28 years, Zahir Shah is seen as a potential rallying point to help steer Afghanistan out of decades of bloodshed.

The ex-king is from Afghanistan's ethnic Pashtun majority from the south of the country, once the heartland of the Taliban and center of operations of Osama bin Laden.

AFP

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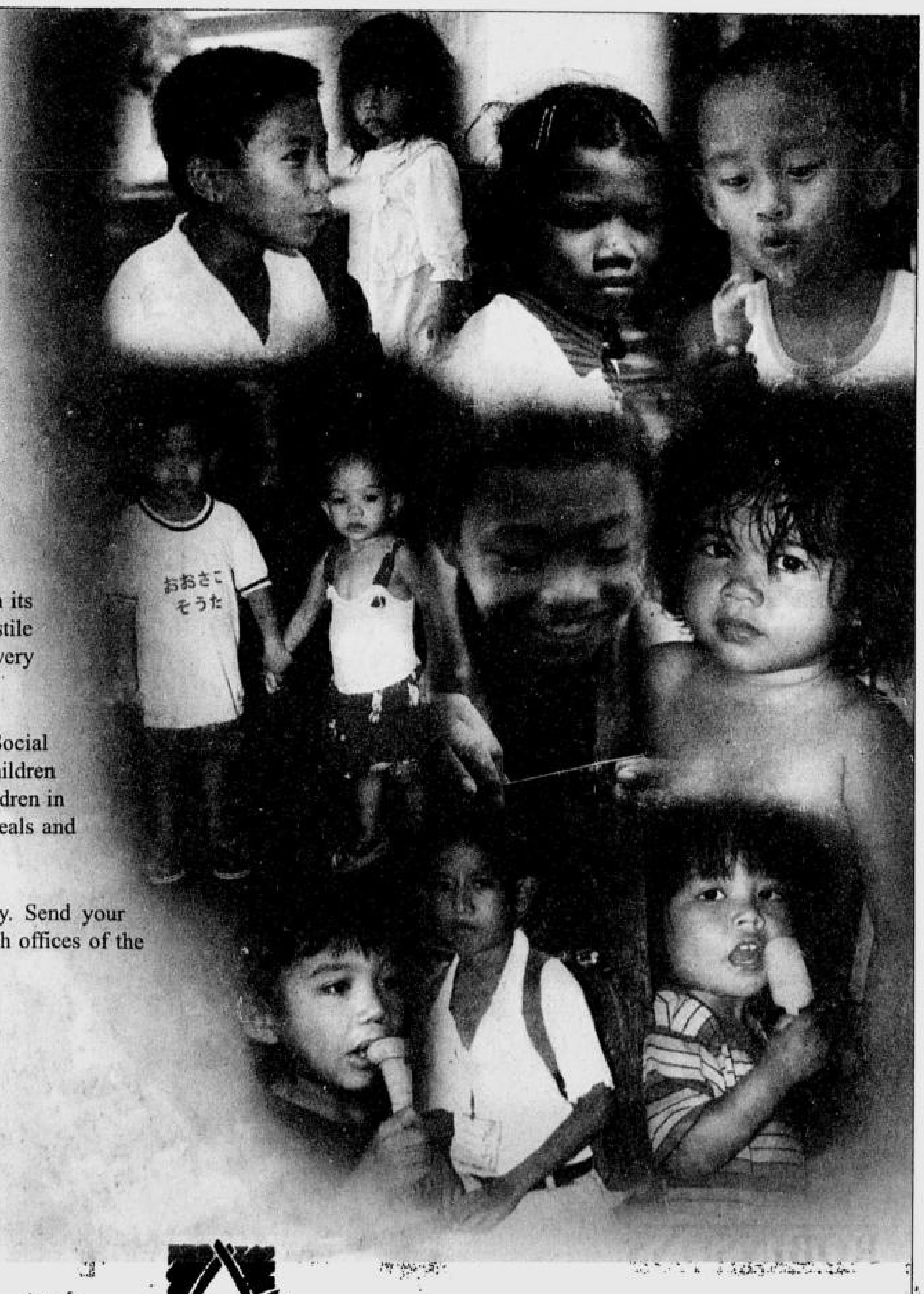

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S. Korea hunts for billions embezzled from public funds

SEOUL—South Korea authorities banned 100 people from leaving the country Monday as an investigation started into the alleged misuse of billions of dollars of public funds intended for economic reforms.

The probe could lead to the punishment of corporate or bank officials for misusing or embezzling the state bailout money.

Under immediate investigation were 35 cases of businessmen stealing public funds or misappropriating money abroad, officials said.

The Prosecutor General's Office said a ban on overseas trips has been imposed on about 100 people who would be summoned for investigation by a special team.

Yu Jong-min, an official at the prosecutor's office, said a joint taskforce, which will also involve financial experts was launched on Monday. He added that summons would be issued from Tuesday.

The National Tax Service also said it had begun a probe into charges of tax evasion by those suspected of misappropriating funds.

President Kim Dae-jung has vowed to act sternly against those responsible for the irregularities, which were made public by state inspectors last week, sparking widespread public anger.

"The government will seek ruthless legal measures against moguls who pocketed taxpayers' money while driving their companies into bankruptcy," Kim warned in a television interview on Saturday.

He also insisted banks should take responsibility for lost of public funds.

The Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI) said 7.1 trillion won ($5.6 billion) had been looted by executives at companies and financial institutions which had been kept afloat with state money.

The lost money included 500 billion won stashed abroad.

More than 150 trillion won has been injected into troubled financial and corporate firms as part of South Korea's economic reforms since the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

The government has so far recovered 37.7 trillion won, just 25 percent of sum spent on the fragile financial and corporate sectors.

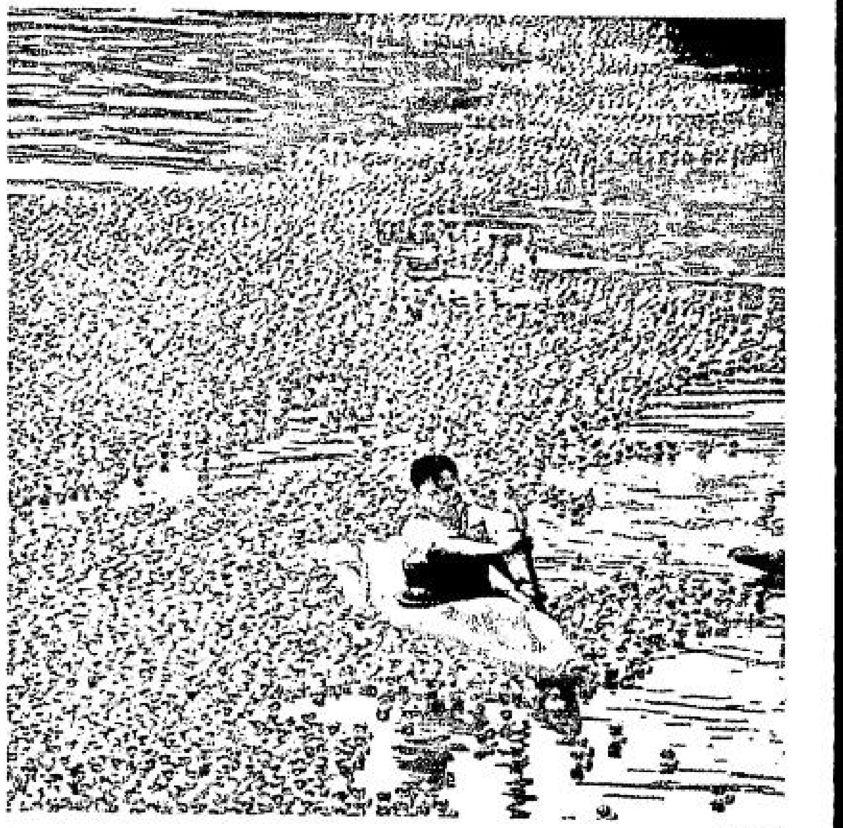
The BAI warned the government may be unable to recover 30 trillion won of public funds already injected into the banking sector.

Prosecutors also warned of tough action against those suspected of misusing public money.

"The embezzlement of public funds is a vile economic crime to fulfill private interest and greed at the cost of public pain," a senior prosecutor, who was not identified, told Yonhap news agency.

"We'll make it a rule to interrogate suspects in detention and seek as heavy punishment as possible."

On top of public anger, the opposition Grand National Party on Monday insisted top economic officials be punished for failing to oversee the state funds handed out. *AFP*



REUTERS

DUCK RACE

A man rows his kayak through rubber ducks during the Singapore 2001 charity Duck Race at Boat Quay in Singapore Dec. 2. Contestants adopt a rubber duck to vie for a cash prize.

Harrison's ashes to repose in Ganges

VARANASI, India—George Harrison's family plan to immerse the ashes of the Beatle guitarist who died last week in the sacred Ganges river following a private ceremony, a spokesperson for the Hare Krishna movement said on Monday.

But the spokesperson Mahamantra Das said Harrison's widow, Olivia and son Dhani wished to make the visit to India and the ceremony at the holy city of Varanasi "very private."

"They don't to want disclose their identities," he said in New Delhi, adding that Harrison's family was accompanied by two members of the Hare Krishna movement.

He said Hare Krishna members around the world had been praying "for the soul" of the musician who became a Hare Krishna follower and believed in reincarnation.

"Harrison was our dear devotee," said the spokesperson for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), popularly known as the Hare Krishna movement.

According to the tenets of Hare Krishna, which is a Hindu sect, the immersion of the ashes is symbolic of the soul's journey toward eternal consciousness.

The guitarist, who died at the age of 58 last week in Los Angeles, was cremated in a cardboard coffin.

Das said the movement had been told by its London office that Harrison's family was flying to India for the immersion of his ashes in Varanasi.

Some of Harrison's ashes would also to be immersed at two other holy sites in Allahabad and Brindavan in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, Das said.

British newspapers reported that Harrison's family planned to travel by a private plane from Los Angeles where Harrison died last Thursday after a long battle with cancer.

Harrison died at a private residence in Los Angeles with his wife and Dhani, 24, at his side.

British newspapers said on Sunday that Harrison spent his last moments chanting "Hare Krishna" and told his friends and family it helped him "see God."

Two devotees from the Hare Krishna movement were also nearby as he died and the pictures of the Hindu gods Rama and Krishna were near his bed, the newspapers said. *Reuters*

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Indonesian Muslims burn down 6 Christian villages

JAKARTA—Armed Muslim groups have burnt down six Christian villages in Indonesia's Central Sulawesi province and forced some 13,000 people to flee, a church official said Monday.

The residents were evacuated to other villages or fled into the forest after Muslim groups attacked and razed the villages in the area around the town of Poso in Thursday, the Rev. Erna Makarensi said from the provincial capital of Palu.

Reports have said at least seven people were killed in fighting over several days last week, including two of the attackers.

Four soldiers were wounded, two of them critically, during clashes between troops and the Muslim groups in the area on Saturday evening and early Sunday, a hospital nurse and police said.

Makarensi said she herself helped evacuate people from the villages.

"There were no security personnel in the area on the day of the attack and the evacuation was fully assisted by the churches," Makarensi said, adding that some 400 soldiers and police have since been deployed in the Poso area.

She said the villages of Betalemba, Patiwunga, Tangkura, Padalembara, Dewua and Sanginora had now been completely burnt down.

About 300 extra police—including 200 from Jakarta—were sent to the area on Friday and Saturday, a provincial police spokesperson said.

Adjunct Senior Commissioner Agus Sugianto said the military sent two companies (about 200 men) from Gorontalo in North Sulawesi to Poso on Sunday.

A police officer at the Poso district office, Fa Aslin, said there had been no new clashes between troops and Muslim gangs since Sunday morning.

A nurse at the local hospital said one soldier was shot in the head and another in the stomach.

Poso has been the scene of almost two years of sectarian fighting between Muslims and Christians in which more than 300 people have died.

Michael Elmquist, deputy United Nations humanitarian coordinator, said Tuesday that a recent mission to the province had found an "extremely tense" situation, with a "depth of hatred" between Christians and Muslims.

He said up to 7,000 members of Laskar Jihad—a Java-based armed Islamic group which has waged a "jihad" (holy war) against Christians in the Malukus—had moved to Poso to continue their battle.

Reports from the Vatican quoted the Bishop of Manado in North Sulawesi, Joseph Suwatan, as saying that as many as 50,000 Christians had fled their homes. He could not immediately be reached for confirmation.

The Koran Tempo daily said that among the refugees were 1,300 Balinese settlers in the villages, which were attacked. They were taken to Tolai, another Balinese settlement in the neighboring district of Donggala. *AFP*

Swiss reject bid to abolish their army

BERN—Swiss voters overwhelmingly rejected on Sunday a proposal to abolish their armed forces, considered by many in this small, neutral, alpine nation as a vital part of their lives.

The proposed referendum was put forward by the Switzerland Without An Army group, which argued the country does not face any military threat and shelving the largely reservist-based army would not diminish Switzerland's security.

Some 78 percent of Swiss voters disagreed, also rejecting a second initiative by the group to establish a voluntary civilian peace corps aimed at defusing violence at home and abroad.

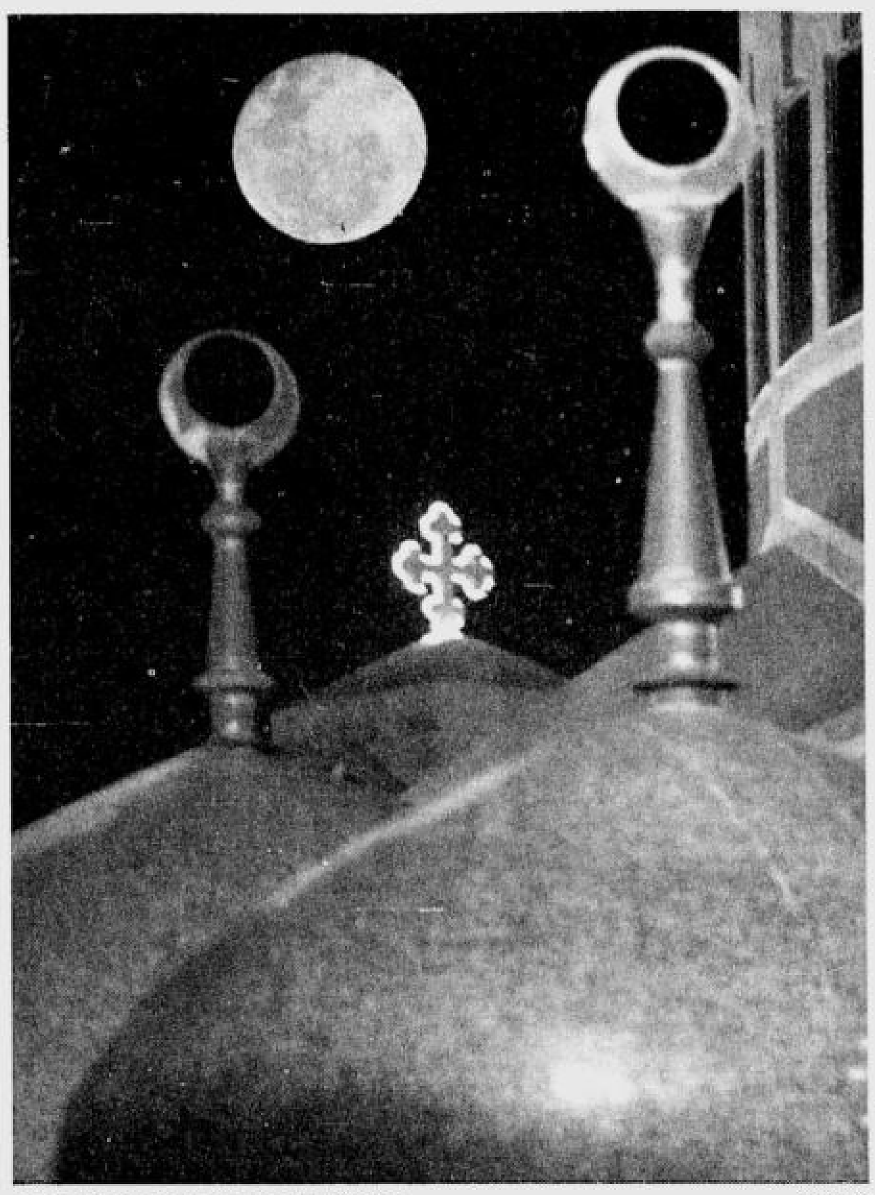
Expressing disappointment at the results, the group nevertheless said it had expected defeat, blaming the current climate of insecurity and disarray in both Switzerland and around the world.

"People are hanging on to certainties, to the supposed existing security," spokesperson Tobia Schnebli said.

Twelve years ago, a similar referendum on scrapping the Armed Forces mustered 36 percent support among voters and campaigners said on Sunday they would continue their efforts.

Supporters of the referendum proposal had argued that the Armed Forces were an outdated institution and a "man's world where blind obedience and contempt of women still rules."

They had also questioned the nine billion Swiss francs ($5.6 billion) it costs to maintain the Armed Forces every year arguing the resources could be better spent on non-military initiatives. *AFP*



AUSPICIOUS PERSPECTIVE REUTERS

The full moon is seen over the Orthodox Church and between the domes of the King Abdullah mosque in Jordan in the early hours of Dec. 2. Muslims and Christians across the world celebrate Christmas and Eid al-Fitr in the next half of December.

US cloning firm grows monkey eggs into embryos

WASHINGTON—Scientists who created a furor by cloning human embryos said on Sunday they had made monkey eggs grow into embryos without the benefit of sperm, in a process known as parthenogenesis.

They said their experiments showed the potential for using the therapy to provide tailored medical treatments for women, or perhaps to use eggs donated by women to treat close relatives. They also opened new avenues of understanding basic biology and when life begins.

Michael West, chief executive officer of Advanced Cell Technology (ACT), said his company hopes to use such experiments to find ways to rejuvenate human tissues and treat disease.

"This whole field is so new. That is why we need all opportunities to be open," he told a conference on regenerative medicine. West and other scientists at the conference had earlier on Sunday called on the US government to keep their research legal and to provide funding for it.

Last Sunday West said scientists at his Massachusetts-based company had cloned three human embryos using nuclear transfer—taking a human egg, removing the nucleus and replacing it with the nucleus from another adult's cell.

He also said they had created one human embryo through parthenogenesis.

West has stressed that his company's aim is not to breed babies but to use the embryos as a source of stem cells, which might be used to grow tissue and even organ transplants for patients using their own cells.

None of the tiny balls of cells—the largest grew only to six cells—lived long. Other scientists in the field criticized the work, saying the ACT team had done nothing special.

They noted that other experimenters had managed to get eggs to generate to six-cell size without using nuclear transfer or the other methods employed by the ACT team. They said to be really successful, the tiny embryos would have to divide to the blastocyst stage, a hollow ball of about 100 eggs.

It is not until blastocyst stage that stem cells can be removed from the embryos, the scientists said.

West's presentation at Sunday's conference, sponsored by the Mary Ann Liebert publishing company that published the human cloning study, in part answered the criticisms.

The team, led by ACT vice-president Jose Cibelli, got eggs taken from macaque monkeys to divide to blastocyst size.

"We got 14 percent of them forming blastocysts and rather nice ones," West told the conference.

They were able to pull cells out of one of the blastocysts that looked like embryonic stem cells. Despite the attention given to stem cell research, the elusive cells, which act like a master cell for the body, are extremely difficult to isolate and identify.

"These cells grow rather well," West said.

Cells taken from the blastocyst were coaxed into becoming neurons, West said. The neurons secreted dopamine and serotonin, two important hormones produced in the brain.

One way of testing stem cells is to inject them into mice whose immune systems do not work well. The cells will often grow into tumors known as teratomas.

Cells taken from these teratomas grew into epithelial cells—the cells that, for instance, line the intestine. Others became eye cells, hair follicle cells or skin cells, West said.

The hope is that someday a person's own stem cells could be used to grow new brain cells to repair the damage done by Parkinson's, or to repair a heart ravaged by heart attack, or to cure diabetes.

But some critics say experiments involving the destruction of human embryos constitute murder and should be outlawed. *Reuters*

Chen urges China to accept Taiwan's choice

TAIPEI—Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian on Monday challenged Beijing to "respect the choice of the Taiwanese people" following a stunning general election success for his pro-independence party.

Chen also insisted his policies toward China would remain unchanged in the wake of Saturday's polls, which made his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) the biggest in parliament.

"The mainland authorities looked down on me and looked down upon my government before the election," he told foreign academics at a political conference here.

"I hope after the election, Beijing authorities can accept the choice of the Taiwanese people and take hold of this rare window of opportunity before it disappears."

Chen said he hoped Taiwan could "serve as a beacon for the modernization and democratization of the mainland."

Beijing's leaders, who have made no secret of their loathing for Chen since his election last year, are likely to be enraged by the president's first significant comment since Saturday.

Although China has as yet issued no official response to the result, observers say it is deeply concerned at the rise in pro-independence forces and the near-eclipse of the once dominant Kuomintang (KMT), or Nationalists.

The election saw the DPP win 87 of 225 seats in parliament. The KMT, which favors negotiation with China toward eventual reunification, gained just 68 seats, the first time it has lost control of the chamber.

The KMT also held Taiwan's presidency for more than half a century before Chen triumphed in last year's election.

Relations between Taipei and Beijing have been deadlock since Chen took office.

The president rejects the so-called "one China policy," which decrees Taiwan is an integral part of Chinese territory, while Beijing insists it is a compulsory precursor to any talks.

Chen said Monday he would not be budged.

"The promise I made before the election, including forming the national stability alliance and cross-straits policy, will not change because of the DPP victory," said Chen, also referring to a proposed cross-party coalition in parliament.

"I have more hope that Taiwan's democracy will serve as a beacon for the modernization and democratization of the mainland," he told participants from the International Symposium on Democratic Consolidation, Peace and Security, who met Chen at his office.

Also Monday, DPP leaders were meeting in Taipei to thrash out their post-election strategy.

The gathering of top party officials at the DPP headquarters here was expected to discuss how best the party could build Chen's planned 120-member national stability alliance, cementing its control in parliament.

The KMT has ruled out any official participation in the scheme, but a number of its legislators are expected to be asked to join individually.

Newspaper reports said DPP leaders began telephoning KMT parliamentarians immediately after the election in a bid to tempt them to cross party lines.

The DPP is anxious to build up a strong position in parliament. Chen's first 19 months in office were blighted by battles with the KMT-controlled chamber, a clash of heads which some observers blame for the lack of effective measures to kickstart Taiwan's ailing economy.

Taiwan's stock market leapt more than four percent Monday morning in the first trading after the election, with dealers anticipating the DPP's new grip on power would bring political and economic stability. *AFP*

DOZENS of Korean girls clad in Santa Claus clothing wave during a street event in Seoul Dec. 2 as if to affirm that Santa's no fiction. AFP

Teacher who said Santa didn't exist told to leave

CANBERRA—An Australian primary school banned a teacher after she told a class of six year olds that Santa Claus does not exist.

Angry parents from the Corowa public school, 500 km southwest of Sydney, demanded action when some children arrived home in tears after a reserve teacher, on her first day on the job, told them their parents brought their presents.

"Santa Claus has always visited our house at Christmas," mother Vanessa Lohse told the Daily Telegraph newspaper.

"My three kids (aged five, six, and eight) don't believe Santa is real now—it's really put a damper on Christmas."

The school's headmaster Ian Paynter referred complaints about the incident to the New South Wales education department.

"She was a casual teacher but she won't be coming back," a department spokesperson said.

"(She) was not disciplined but did receive counseling about the age appropriateness of responses to children's questions."

The spokesperson said the education department had no formal position on Santa Claus but advised teachers to tell students to ask their parents when questions about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy arose.

The teacher, who usually takes high school students, could not be reached for comment. *Reuters*

THIS undated photo released by the Conservation International shows a Jaragua Sphaero lizard adult female on a ten-cent US coin. At 1.6 cm (3/4 of an inch), it is deemed to be the world's smallest reptile. AFP

Smallest reptile discovered in Caribbean

WASHINGTON—The world's smallest reptile—the Jaragua Sphaero, measuring some 1.6 cm (three-quarters of an inch) in length—has been discovered in the Caribbean by two US biologists, Washington-based Conservation International announced Monday.

The species lives in Jaragua National Park in the Dominican Republic and on Beata Island, off the southern coast of Hispaniola, the island shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

According to the researchers who made the discovery—Blair Hedges, an evolutionary biologist at Pennsylvania State University, and Richard Thomas, a biologist at the University of Puerto Rico—the Jaragua Sphaero or dwarf gecko is similar in size to another lizard that lives in the Virgin Islands, the Sphaerodactylus parthenopion.

The newly-discovered lizards (scientific name: Sphaerodactylus ariasae), are the smallest of the 23,000 species known as amniotes, a group that includes all reptiles, birds and mammals.

"Our discovery illustrates that we still don't know everything about the Earth's species, even in areas that are very close to the United States," said Hedges.

"We did not even know the species existed, although the area has been studied by biologists for several hundred years."

But like many other tiny species in the Caribbean, the Jaragua Sphaero is in danger of extinction, the researchers noted.

"The Caribbean is one of the richest places on Earth in terms of unique species, but they are extremely threatened," said Michael Smith, senior research fellow for the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science at Conservation International.

"If the Caribbean continues to lose species at the current rate," he added, "then one of the world's most distinctive natural systems will be devastated in our lifetimes."

The details of the discovery are outlined in the December issue of the Caribbean Journal of Science. *AFP*

Police say Tommy to face trial 'ASAP'

JAKARTA—Indonesian police said Monday that Tommy Suharto, son of the former dictator, and 13 other people will face trial "as soon as possible" over the murder of a judge and illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

The dossiers on Hutomo "Tommy" Mandala Putra and 13 suspected accomplices were "under preparation" to be submitted to a district court, said Jakarta Police spokesperson Anton Bahrul Alam.

"We are trying to have them ready for trial as soon as possible because we have all the evidence and witnesses with us. There are 14 suspects in both cases, including Tommy," Alam said.

He said detectives on Monday continued questioning Tommy, cross-checking his statements with those made by the other suspects.

But Tommy's lawyer Elsa Syarief said police as of Sunday night had not yet questioned Tommy on whether he ordered the killing of Judge Syafiuddin Kartasasmita or about the firearms and explosives offences.

"They have not yet asked him about either issue. I have not seen my client today, we'll see what's going to develop," Syarief said.

After more than a year on the run the former millionaire playboy was arrested last Wednesday at a rented home in Bintaro, a residential district in South Jakarta.

Tommy, 39, failed to turn himself in on Nov. 3 last year to serve an 18-month jail sentence for corruption. On Oct. 1 this year the Supreme Court caused a storm of controversy by quashing the corruption conviction.

But police have also named him as a suspect in the drive-by murder in July of Kartasasmita—the judge who convicted him of graft—and in a spate of bombings in Jakarta in recent years. Both crimes are punishable by death.

Since Suharto senior stepped down in May 1998 his family has come under scrutiny for the fortunes they acquired during his 32-year rule. Tommy, Suharto's youngest son, is the only family member to face trial for corruption.

Time magazine, in a report in June 1998, estimated Tommy's wealth at some $800 million.

Police have been showered with praise for the capture after months of ridicule over their near-farcical manhunt, during which they consulted psychics and dropped "wanted" posters from a helicopter.

But legal experts have questioned whether they will be able to build a case against Tommy over the murder and the bombing incidents. *AFP*

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Rosebud moves around in public bus

BAGUIO CITY—How does a high-profile witness like former narcotics agent Mary Ong moves around in various sorties in the country?

By public transportation, said Ong, also known as Rosebud.

Ong, who addressed around 600 publishers, editors and reporters gathered for the 6th National Press Congress at Teachers' Camp here on Saturday, claimed she arrived in Baguio City aboard a "public bus."

"I guess God is shielding me (from harm)," said the controversial witness who exposed the alleged involvement of Sen. Panfilo Lacson and other top Philippine National Police officials in illegal drugs.

She said she has two bodyguards but from the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

She also said her various sorties in the provinces to talk about the evils of illegal drugs are ways to protect herself from harm.

"In order for me to stay alive, I go around the country talking about illegal drugs," she said.

But Ong complained about her "uncomfortable bus trip" to the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption forum on criminality held here after her speaking engagement in Teachers' Camp.

She discussed her predicament to VACC chair Dante Jimenez; VACC president Lauro Vizconde; Welson Chua and Charles Leung, newly installed VACC Luzon chair, whose sons were murder victims; and E-Just Movement chair Leonard de Vera.

"I missed the first class air-conditioned bus so I had to endure the trip. My backside was aching . . . what kind of government is this, when (an important witness like myself) can't secure a government vehicle, and will have to take the bus," she said in Filipino.

She said her lecture tours had sent her to Davao, General Santos City, Digos in Davao del Sur, Dumaguete City, Iloilo City, Cebu City and most of the schools in Metro Manila, without a secured vehicle.

"During my trip to Batangas recently, that tour took its toll on my aging car. What kind of sacrifice does government expect me to take?" she said. *Robert Abaño and Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

AFP spy chief launches probe of Luzon kidnaps

BAGUIO CITY—Col. Victor Corpus, chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp), is investigating supposedly whitewashed cases of "kidnap-for-ransom" and "kidnap-for-illegal narcotics" in Luzon which suggest the slow but steady spread of "narco-politics" to the provinces.

This was revealed by the Baguio City coordinator of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) here on Monday.

Charles Leung, VACC Baguio coordinator, said Corpus is reviewing profiles on local kidnapping cases that the VACC submitted to him on Sunday.

Many of the cases occurred in far-flung provinces and involved relatives of top VACC members like former Manila Councilor Chico Go.

Go's niece was victimized in a bungled kidnapping attempt in an Abra town recently, but the suspects were allowed to post bail.

The VACC profile on the Abra case noted that the suspects had links to an Abra town official.

CORPUS

Corpus addressed participants in the 6th National Press Congress of the Publishers Association of the Philippines Inc. on Saturday where he discussed the future of his campaign against narco-politics and the series of exposés he made since June that linked Sen. Panfilo Lacson to organized crime.

Corpus tried to solicit support from provincial media in sustaining a public battle against narco-politics.

He said evidence that drug money now controlled various elements of government made the media the only logical "battle field to wage a war against creeping narco-politics."

But Leung said Corpus ordered a review of kidnap-for-ransom cases in the provinces after a local news report about a supposed Isafp witness, who told a group of reporters here about a surveillance operation orchestrated by the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF).

The surveillance allegedly targeted 10 Chinese-Filipino families, including the Leungs.

Leung's son, UP graduate Giancarlo, and a friend, Tihani Tingal, were abducted on March 5, and were killed three days later, despite ongoing ransom negotiations.

The police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) arrested three youths with ties to the Samahang Ilokano Fraternity for Giancarlo's murder.

"But there are many leads which the police authorities never followed," Leung told Corpus.

One of these leads was a telephone call traced to a known safehouse of a Cordillera militia.

Corpus reviewed the videotape of the interview with the alleged Isafp witness made by a cable company here. He later told Leung that the supposed witness was never part of the Isafp's roster of state witnesses.

Corpus had accused Lacson of involvement in organized crime and laundering money from these illegal activities in various bank accounts in the United States.

Lacson had denied the charges but Corpus insisted that he had evidence to back up his accusations against the former national police chief.

Corpus' charges were investigated by the Senate blue ribbon committee. The investigation was suspended but Sen. Sergio Osmeña III said it would resume after Congress is through deliberating over next year's budget. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Wife battery, child abuse rare in Ifugao

BAGUIO CITY—The Ifugaos in the Cordillera have the lowest incidence of wife battery and physical abuse on children among 46 tribes sampled in a study by an American anthropologist.

The study, conducted in 1981 by anthropologist David Levinson but was published only in 1997 by the Yale University, is an "ideal example" to lessen violence against women and children in the country, said Rina Jimenez David, national chair of the women's group Pilipina, in a forum here last week.

David said the study showed that when signs of domestic violence are observed in an Ifugao household, the elders and the families of the couple are immediately consulted. In the presence of family members, the elders give advice to stop feuds among the couple.

The spouse subjected to abuse undergoes a *bagbagan* (counseling) if she or he seeks counsel from relatives because the family council is convened to hear both parties.

"In Ifugao, the intervention on family conflicts keeps the family united," the study said.

David said this is probably the reason violence in Ifugao families is rare.

She said violence in ordinary Filipino households ranges from physical, sexual and psychological abuse.

"It is no longer safe anywhere else if violence happens right at your own home," she said.

In Ifugao, there are practically little or no reported cases of domestic violence because of the existence of the customary laws against physical abuse, which all Ifugaos, even those outside of their traditional villages, obey.

"The Ifugaos continue to observe the customary laws and the presence of elders who lead in collective decision making," the study said.

It also said it is customary within Ifugao that elders or clan members have the right to intervene whenever there is conflict in the family.

The study also discovered that other groups with rare cases of wife beating are the "Andamans, Copper Eskimo, Iroquois (North America), Ona (Canada) and the Thais."

But among the Ibalois in Benguet, cases of violence exist and continue to increase because the families of the victims refuse to report them to the authorities, according to Benguet Vice Gov. Edna Tabanda.

"We know that there are rampant cases of rape and violence against women and children in Benguet, but the victims and their families don't want to report these to the authorities," Tabanda, an Ibaloi, said.

She said families of the victims in Benguet resort to amicable settlement through *tongtongan* (dialogue).

Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Provincial media meet starts today

TOP officials of Aklan province will receive today hundreds of media practitioners nationwide to formally start the four-day 1st National Media Summit of the Federation of Provincial Press Clubs of the Philippines (FPPCP) in Boracay.

In a statement, the FPPCP said Gov. Joeben Miraflores, Rep. Gabrielle Calizo and Malay town Mayor Ceceron "Dodong" Cawaling will lead Aklanons in welcoming summit delegates headed by FPPCP President Bernie Miaque, publisher of the Western Visayas Daily Informer.

This will be followed by an exchange of fraternal messages among press club presidents and other press groups like the College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP), Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (FOCAP), Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas (KBP), Manila Overseas Press Club (MOPC), National Press Club (NPC), National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), Newsguild of the Philippines (Newsguild) and Philippine Press Institute (PPI).

President Macapagal-Arroyo and other national government officials led by Senate President Franklin Drilon, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, Justice Secretary Hernani Perez, Interior and Local Government Secretary Jose Lina and others were invited to address the summit and hold panel discussions with the delegates.

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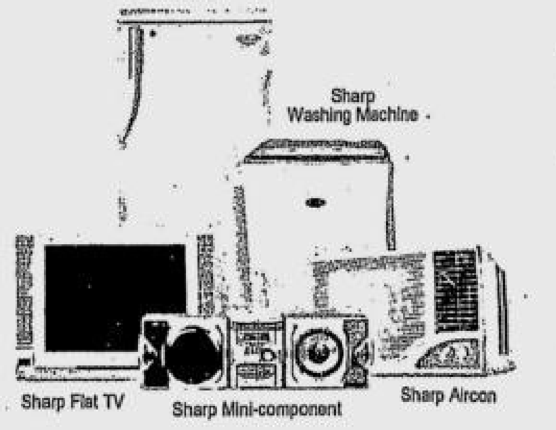

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers. SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 23°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Hi 24° Lo 14°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 19°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 21°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 23°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 27° Lo 21°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 26°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 21°
Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 24°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 26°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 23°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/12/04/01

ROUNDUP

Gabriela monument

SAN QUINTIN, Abra—As part of the National Heroes' Day celebration in Abra, provincial officials unveiled a bronze monument of Gabriela Silang near the province's Welcome Park here on Friday. The monument honors Silang, an Abra native, who led Filipino revolutionaries in the Ilocos region. The bronze sculpture of Silang on horseback was created by sculptor Juan Sajid Imao, whose wife is a native of Abra. After the ceremonies, Gov. Vicente Valera led the inauguration of the "Governors' Gallery" at the provincial capitol. The gallery contained the portraits of the 24 Abra governors from 1901. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Ople hails generals

HAGONOY, Bulacan—Sen. Blas Ople and the provincial government hailed two sibling-generals in Bulacan for their loyalty to the Philippine National Police at the height of coup rumors against the Macapagal administration. Chief Supt. Doroteo Reyes II, chief legal officer in Camp Crame, and his brother Chief Supt. Domingo Reyes Jr., Southern Tagalog police director, were named local heroes during the National Heroes' Day on Nov. 30.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Dynamite fishers killed

CEBU CITY—Two fishermen were killed after the dynamite they used in fishing in the waters off Lapulapu City exploded just before they could throw it to the sea. Killed on the spot was Miguelito Fajardo, 31, of Tingo, Sta. Rosa, Lapulapu City. The other victim, Junrey Fajardo, 22, died at the hospital in Lapulapu City on Friday. The two were using dynamite while fishing off the seawaters of Caubian Island on Friday morning.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Drug dealer arrested

CEBU CITY—Police here nabbed Friday night a suspected big time drug dealer with more than 200 grams of shabu in T. Padilla here. The Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Division headed by Chief Insp. Paul Labra II arrested Arturo Villacarillo after the shabu was found in his house in a CIDG raid. Labra said Villacarillo was caught while repacking the shabu inside his house. Villacarillo denied owning the shabu but admitted to being a drug pusher.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Highway robbery foiled

GUMACA, Quezon—Police arrested two robbery-holdup suspects here the other day after his target victims foiled the crime. The suspects, Leopoldo Pocamas, 53, of Valenzuela City, and a certain Charlito Galvez tried to hold up Richard Ong, 31, a Singaporean tourist, Gemma Aco and Gloria Vallespin. The three were riding the vehicle driven by Pocamas with Galvez as his alternate driver when Pocamas announced the holdup and hit Ong's head with a wooden club. But Aco fought back by also hitting the suspect with a metal bar she found inside the vehicle. Vallespin called for help. Police responded and arrested the suspects.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Drug supplier nabbed

LUCENA CITY—Police arrested suspected drug pusher Larry Alarva, 37, resident of Sampaguita St., Bel-Air Subdivision in a buy-bust operation Thursday. Confiscated from him were a piece of marked P500 bill, a clutch bag that contained a mini-weighing scale, several grams of shabu and shabu sniffing paraphernalia. Police records show that Alarva is the main supplier of illegal drugs in the city and in Sariaya, Pagbilao and Tayabas.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Illegal fishers caught

PAGBILAO, Quezon—Police and fish wardens on Thursday arrested and detained two fishermen caught in the act of illegal fishing. Confiscated from Mariano Plata, 46, and Ricardo Rivera, 51 of Barangay Pulo here were a motorized boat that use fine mesh fishnets, which is prohibited under the Philippine Fisheries Law, and several marine products, notably aquarium fishes.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

15,000 farmers lose irrigation

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The National Irrigation Administration in Eastern Visayas (NIA) has temporarily cut off water supply to more than 15,000 farmers in Leyte's 20 towns to pressure farmers to settle their dues amounting to about P140 million.

Engineer Alexander Reuyan, NIA Eastern Visayas director, said they came up with the "difficult decision" to cut off irrigated water starting December, the beginning of the crop season, because the nonpayment of irrigation fees have drained the agency's finances.

He said the salaries and benefits of the NIA employees have been delayed. The NIA was also forced to lay off about 50 percent of their field personnel "because we don't have the money (to pay) for their salaries."

"We have sacrificed so much, actually," he told the Inquirer. "We really have to pursue our collection."

He, however, clarified that the NIA will continue to supply water for palay that are about to be harvested. "We will only try to delay the cropping calendar," he said.

The NIA is servicing more than 15,000 farmers in 20 of Leyte's 49 towns. Of the number, about 6,000 have not paid their irrigation fees amounting to P140 million, said Reuyan.

"As far as I could remember, some of them have not paid their irrigation fees dating back since the NIA started collecting irrigation fees," he said. The collection of fees started in 1997.

Reuyan said the problem became worse when former President Joseph Estrada issued a directive providing free irrigated water to farmers.

The reasons cited by the farmers for their non-payment of water fees was low palay production and poor irrigation facilities, he said.

On poor irrigation facilities, Reuyan said the NIA has already addressed the problem. "We spent P150 million just to rehabilitate these irrigation facilities. But still, they did not pay us their irrigation service fees," he said.

The farmers' irrigation fees constitute at least 40 percent of the NIA's income, he said. The NIA is one government entity that generates its own income, making it ineligible to avail of any government subsidy, Reuyan said.

Drug suspects 'falling like bowling pins'

DIGOS CITY—Suspected pushers are falling one after the other as trigger men allegedly belonging to the emerging Digos Death Squad went on a killing spree here since last month.

Last week alone, five suspected drug pushers were killed. "Pushers were falling like bowling pins," a resident told the INQUIRER.

But the Diocese of Digos was shocked "by the apparent inhumane act the DDS has taken," after the ears of two of the victims were slashed by their attackers.

"Bishop Generoso Camiña would be coming out with a statement deploring the inhuman way of the vigilante group," a source from the clergy said.

On Sunday night, suspected members of the Digos Death Squad, which was obviously patterned after the Davao Death Squad in Davao City, gunned down Berna Sanguile, said to be one of the biggest retailers of shabu here.

Chief Insp. Noel Saniel, city police chief, said there was a report that after killing Sanguile, the suspects tried to slash her ear as what they did to Fernando Rubia, another suspected drug pusher, on Saturday.

"They were prevented by the crowd that started to gather around the crime scene," Saniel said.

Mayor Arsenio Latasa said he could not understand why the victims' ears had to be cut off, but he suspects it could be "a proof of service."

Latasa said the vigilante group could be receiving funds from people who detest drug pushers and that their payment for the service done depends on proofs presented.

"Or it could be their way of making a statement, but whatever it is, it is obviously aimed at sowing fear among people dealing with drugs," Latasa said.

But the mayor said whatever the motive behind the activities of the suspected vigilante group is, it was still wrong for them to take the life of pushers.

"We are operating within the bounds of law. I already ordered the police to investigate the killings and arrest whoever was behind them," h said.

Latasa said the activities of the DDS were not helping the city, which was already lingering from security concerns in other parts of Mindanao.

"It's tarnishing the image of Digos as a livable place," he said.

Latasa, trying to dissociate himself from the DDS, also said the activities of the DDS became a slap in the face of local officials "because it seems we were helpless against the drug problem and they (vigilantes) were effective." *Anthony Allada and Allan Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

NATIVE CHRISTMAS TOOTS SOBERANO

The sale of Christmas decorative items is expected to peak in the coming days and this woman on Session Road appears to be capitalizing on the holiday mood as she peddles a holiday lantern made of rattan.

Berserk man kills wife, 2 daughters

VILLAVERDE, Nueva Vizcaya—A woman and her two daughters were hacked and killed while another daughter was severely injured Saturday when the woman's husband allegedly went berserk in a remote village here.

Insp. Ric Rosario, police chief here, said Rosita Calonge, 35, her daughters Dony Rose, 9, and Kimberly, 7, were found dead from hack wounds in their house in Sitio Muloy in upland Barangay Cabuluan here.

Police have initially tagged Calonge's husband and the children's father, Dionisio Calonge, as the primary suspect in the killing.

Dionisio, 37, suffered cuts in the body but police believed the wounds were self-inflicted.

Melody, 11, the eldest and only surviving child, suffered hack wounds in the chin, nape and chest, and was taken, together with her father, to the Veterans' Regional Hospital in Bayombong town, about 20 km from here.

Police said before Melody fell unconscious, she was able to tell police that her father attacked them. The girl is now in critical condition at the VRH.

Investigators recovered from the family's house a 19-inch bolo and a 13-inch knife, both bloodied and believed to have been used in the crimes.

Lourdes Amlag, 44, Rosita's elder sister, said around 4 a.m. Saturday, they heard Rosita screaming for help and the children crying.

Coming from their house about 50 meters away, Rosita's parents, Pedro and Ana Amlag, rushed to the Calonges' house and found the victims' bodies already sprawled on the floor, while Dionisio sat in a corner, bleeding and unconscious.

"He was really a violent man," Lourdes said of Dionisio. "It is terrible when he beats up his wife and children, he's really cruel."

Dionisio seemed to be always on the lookout for a fight, Lourdes said, as he was often seen around, even in church services, with a bolo and a knife tucked in his waist.

Lourdes said they could not do anything about Calonge's alleged abuses as their family is overcome with fear.

"Besides, all of us (in the Amlag family) are women, so we're helpless," she said. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Realty firms blame farmers for land mess

BAGUIO CITY—A Baguio-based real estate group sued last week eight farmers of Magalang, Pampanga, for allegedly reneging on a joint venture project involving lands now being developed into a resettlement site by the Mount Pinatubo Commission (MPC) for victims of the 1991 volcano eruption.

Calgryp Philippines, a consortium of Baguio real estate firms, petitioned a regional trial court here on Nov. 23 for a temporary restraining order on the MPC resettlement project because it involved lands which Calgryp contracted from 14 residents of Barangay San Isidro, Magalang.

The MPC project is part of a major resettlement program, covering 2,500 resettlement units, which President Macapagal-Arroyo promised during her State of the Nation Address in July.

The Army's 51st Engineering Brigade is undertaking the project to meet Malacañang's deadline next month.

The 14 residents are Calgryp's supposed partners in the 500,000-unit Calgryp Magalang residential estates project, whose market is the Clark Special Economic Zone, according to Calgryp President Mario Alzona.

Calgryp counsel Federico Mandapat asked the court to compel their partners Lamberto Manalili, Julian Naguid, Jesus Nardo and Virginia Pineda, Agosto and Agustin de Leon, and Jesus de Jesus to account for their involvement in the MPC project, which allegedly violated the 30-hectare Calgryp Magalang estates agreement.

But in Magalang, Manalili said Calgryp had no basis to invoke its joint venture contract with the farmers, claiming that the consortium backed out of the agreement in August.

"The agents of Calgryp offered to buy our land at P100 per square meter. It promised to pay us in cash and in full. Last May, (the firm) paid us only P10,000. Then they came back bringing two checks worth P50,000 each, (and) one, which was post-dated for December. When we inquired about the balance, they did not give us definite answers. They said they would come back in August. They did not return so we decided to call off the transaction," said Manalili, a barangay captain of La Paz Village.

Tom Panis, Calgryp vice president, said the consortium's contracts relied on 14 emancipation patents of land previously owned by a certain Gloria Dizon, which the 14 farmers won from the Department of Agrarian Reform.

He said Calgryp was worried that MPC might have converted these patents back into a government property.

Panis said Calgryp sued only eight of their partner-farmers because they were the only landholders with "clear violations evident to the consortium."

Col. Francisco Bravo, 51st Engineering Brigade commander, said the contested properties of the Magalang farmers were sold in good faith to the MPC in October when Calgryp "failed to meet their terms."

Naguit said the farmers rejected the joint venture right from the very start because the scheme would only allow them to get their full money until after the low-cost units were sold.

But when asked why they signed the joint venture contract last May, Jesus Pineda said: "The agents said it was merely a formality. We were not told of the other terms. We did not understand it because it was in English." *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Bohol folk protest tour office error in geography

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—Boholanos led by Vice Gov. Julius Caesar Herrera protested and took offense to an erroneous announcement by the Department of Tourism attributing to Cebu the sites that could only be found in Bohol, such as the Chocolate Hills.

Herrera said the issue is not a "trivial matter attributed to human error" as claimed by the tourism regional office in Central Luzon (Region 3) but a "grave insult to the sensibilities of Boholanos."

Herrera earlier criticized the "gross ignorance" of Ronaldo Tiotuico, DOT-Region 3 director, after getting hold of a copy of Tiotuico's Sept. 11 letter announcing the opening of Cebu Pacific Air's Clark-Cebu flights.

In his now controversial letter, Tiotuico wrote: "Cebu is known for its heritage and historical sites, picturesque mountain villages, protected wetlands, its well-known Chocolate Hills and tarsiers, fishing village in Pamilacan Island (home of 11 species of dolphins and whales), as well as its indigenous arts and crafts."

The vice governor said that by his "shameful blunder," Tiotuico casually ceded part of Bohol's territory to Cebu.

"The Chocolate Hills, the tarsiers and Pamilacan Island are all within the territorial jurisdiction of Bohol province. Even elementary schoolchildren are aware that the Chocolate Hills are in Bohol. How a regional director of a department that is supposed to be the most knowledgeable of tourism destinations could be so ignorant escapes me," Herrera fumed.

"We can never tell the exact number of tourists who, because they were misinformed, never get to visit Bohol because this was not adequately provided (for) in their schedules," Herrera said.

He said it is not only tourists who are deprived of the experience of seeing Bohol's historical sites and natural wonders but also the tourism industry in Bohol that, just like other tourist destinations in the country, is experiencing hard times.

Herrera made it clear that he has nothing against Cebu.

"I would even say that Bohol should be partly grateful to Cebu for benefiting from its tourism industry. However, it is unfair for Bohol if some of its biggest God-given attractions like the Chocolate Hills, the tarsiers and the whale havens in Pamilacan are erroneously marketed as found in Cebu simply because of one man's ignorance," he said.

Protest over Aglipayan priest turns to picket fracas

CAMILING, Tarlac—More than 20 residents were hurt Monday when clerics from the Aglipayan Church here tried to break into a group of picketing parishioners.

The picket staged by about 150 members of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) stemmed from a deadlock in the month-long negotiation for the removal of their parish priest.

Reports gathered by the Inquirer showed that most of those hurt were women. Among them were parishioners Angie Juan, Caroline Julian and Dr. Sabina Ibarra, who were leading the picket.

The clerics, led by IFI Bishop Alberto Ramento, reportedly harassed the parishioners, tearing down the placards and signs calling for the reassignment or dismissal of IFI priest Nicolas Ferrer of this town.

The parishioners accused Ferrer of pocketing church funds.

They started picketing the Aglipayan cathedral in Barangay Poblacion B last week after the IFI leadership reportedly failed to resolve the issues they raised against Ferrer.

Ramento, the highest-ranking IFI official in Tarlac and Pangasinan, said he could not just give in to the demands of the parishioners.

"There is due process that the church has to follow. We must set up an ecclesiastical tribunal to look into the matter," Ramento told the Inquirer.

Ramento also threatened to bring in supporters from 33 parishes in Tarlac and Pangasinan.

"There will be no more negotiations because these people (parishioners) have no word of honor. They promised to wait for my decision first and not do anything like this," he said.

"If he thinks he (Ramento) can intimidate us, he's wrong. All we want is to have a new parish priest in Camiling because we have lost trust and confidence in Ferrer," said Julian.

Ferrer, however, dismissed his parishioners' allegations, claiming that he was the one who asked for an audit of church funds.

He claimed that the parishioners belong to another IFI faction and they wanted to keep the church collections to themselves.

"I am saddened by their actions because I am innocent," Ferrer said. "I will not step down because in so doing, people would think that I am indeed guilty."

Ferrer had been avoiding calls for a church audit, according to the parishioners. They said the parish council, charged with running the affairs and finances of the church here, was dissolved twice for demanding an audit.

Chief Insp. Roberto Zerrudo, police chief here, said they do not have enough men to watch the picketing parishioners.

"We are monitoring the situation closely," said Zerrudo.

Parishioners also assailed the absence of barangay officials despite knowledge of the tension.

"Instead of keeping the peace and talking with us to get our side, they resort to harassment," Juan said. *Ronaldo Dizon; PDI Central Luzon Desk*

John O gets what he wants, but is not appeased

'Will we have a qualified collector, or will we have a new Senate president?'

OSMEÑA

CUSTOMS commissioner Titus Villanueva has reportedly sacked acting Cebu customs collector Santiago Maravillas who had been accused by Sen. John Osmeña of being involved in rampant smuggling in the Port of Cebu.

But not even this could convince the Senate finance committee chair to withdraw his threat to resign his post and bolt the majority bloc in the Senate.

"Will we have a qualified collector (to replace Maravillas) or will we have a new Senate president?" Osmeña said in insinuating that he was still considering joining the opposition if his demand to have a competent Cebu customs collector is not heeded.

Osmeña complained that Maravillas, when he was first appointed acting Cebu customs collector, was not even qualified to take over the post.

He said Maravillas only had the rank of Collector 3 when he assumed a post that should be occupied by a Collector 6.

Maravillas has been re-assigned to his former post as deputy collector for assessment of the Cebu customs.

"What I have asked for is that the Port of Cebu, the second largest port in the country, should at least have a qualified collector," Osmeña pointed out.

Villanueva has yet to announce Maravillas' replacement.

Osmeña had threatened to bolt the majority bloc last week after he was piqued at the reaction of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho to his queries about Maravillas' alleged illegal activities.

Osmeña had asked Camacho to order the relief of Maravillas after he received reports that the acting Cebu customs collector was involved in the smuggling of 200,000 bags of rice from Vietnam valued at P200 million.

But instead of answering Osmena's queries, Camacho only gave a wry smile which offended Osmeña.

"*Tatawa-tawa, pa*-cute-cute (He was laughing and being cute)," Osmeña described Camacho's answer to him.

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Imelda allowed to go to China for treatment

FLAMBOYANT former first lady Imelda Marcos, facing corruption charges, was given permission by the Sandiganbayan yesterday to go on a month-long trip to China for medical treatment.

It was not immediately known which treatment she was seeking.

The 72-year-old Marcos had cranial surgery here last December to remove a blood clot from an injury she suffered in an accident at home.

Last month a court ordered her arrest on charges of setting up bogus foundations to hide millions of alleged stolen wealth her late husband, dictator Ferdinand Marcos, plundered from government coffers.

She pleaded not guilty to the charge, which she claimed was government harassment, and was released on bail.

She was also charged with violating the Constitution while she was Cabinet minister and head of a foundation in the 1980s.

A division of the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court hearing one of the two cases on Monday granted Marcos permission to leave the country for a month from Dec. 8 to undergo medical treatment in Hong Kong and mainland China.

She had filed an "urgent motion" to be allowed to go on the trip citing the need for "alternative oriental medicine" to help cure an unspecified ailment.

The prosecution had "expressed its conformity" with the request, the Sandiganbayan court's fifth division said.

Ferdinand Marcos ruled the Philippines from 1966 until he was toppled in a popular revolt in 1986 that sent him and his family fleeing overseas.

He died an exile in Hawaii in 1989. Imelda and their three children were subsequently allowed to return to the Philippines, where they regained a political foothold in their provincial bailiwicks—Leyte and Ilocos Norte.

The government estimates that the Marcos family raided state coffers of up to $10 billion in the two decades they were in power. *AFP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, December 4, 2001
1st Week of Advent

1st Reading: **Is 11:1-10**
Gospel: **Lk 10:21-24**

Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit and said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and made them known to the little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. I have been given all things by my Father, so that no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said to them privately, "Fortunate are you to see what you see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings would have liked to see what you see but did not, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."

Commentary:

It is not to say that the poor are good and holy. Not at all. But it is also true that pride can blind the most intelligent people. The poor, precisely because they are such, usually don't fall to pride. That is why they occasionally get to see the light that some of us are unable to see. To discover the mystery of God, we must be able to open our eyes in the dark, renounce knowledge, dominion and control. We have to accept that it is not our light, but God's light that brightens the whole scene, whenever He pleases and how it pleases Him.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: claret@cnl.net; Websites:http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.-claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

POLITICAL LAW (CONSTITUTIONAL LAW)—Plain view doctrine—Under the plain view doctrine, unlawful objects within the "plain view" of an officer who has the right to be in the position to have that view are subject to seizure and may be presented in evidence. For this doctrine to apply, there must be: (a) prior justification; (b) inadvertent discovery of the evidence; and (c) immediate apparent illegality of the evidence before the police. The question is whether these requisites were complied with by the authorities in seizing the marijuana in this case. Because the location of the *shabu* was indicated in the warrant and thus known to the police operatives, it is reasonable to assume that the police found the packets of the *shabu* first. Once the valid portion of the search warrant has been executed, the plain view doctrine can no longer provide any basis for admitting the other items subsequently found. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Mendoza, Second Division, People v. Salanguit, G.R. No. 133254-55, April 19, 2001]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

PAMPANGA MAYORS' LEAGUE

Appeal to H. E. President Gloria Macapagal - Arroyo

Amend Onerous Government-Piatco Contract, Fully Operate Diosdado Macapagal Int'l Airport

RESOLUTION NO. 07
(Series of 2001)

RESOLUTION

VEHEMENTLY DENOUNCING THE ONEROUS PROVISIONS OF THE GRP-PIATCO CONCESSION AGREEMENT AND APPEALING HER EXCELLENCY GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO AMEND THE SAME BY IMPLEMENTING THE PROVISIONS OF R.A. NO. 7227 AND E.O. NO. 174 IN MAKING THE DMIA FULLY OPERATIONAL AS THE PREMIERE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 7227, also known as the "Bases Conversion and Development Act of 1992, provides in its declaration of policies that the National Government shall "accelerate the sound and balanced conversion into alternative productive uses of the Clark and Subic Military reservations and their extensions" as well as "enhance the benefits to be derived in order to promote the economic and social development of Central Luzon in particular and the country in general";

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 62 prescribed the policies and guidelines, to implement Republic Act No. 7227 and Section 2.1.2 thereof provides that the Clark Special Economic Zone is envisioned as a new industrial townsite and a major civil aviation complex for international passenger and/or cargo";

WHEREAS, Proclamation No. 163 created and designated the area covered by the Clark Special Economic Zone and included in this is the former Clark Air Base Proper which covers a developed and fenced-off area of 4,440 hectares;

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 174 dated 28 April 1994 "designated the Clark Special Economic Zone or Clark Field as the future site of a premiere Philippine International Airport";

WHEREAS, on 26 November 1998, the Amended and Restated Concession Agreement for the Build-Operate and Transfer Arrangement of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Passenger Terminal III was consummated between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines through the Department of Transportation and Communication and Manila International Airport Authority and the Philippine International Air Terminal Co., Inc. or PIATCO;

WHEREAS, the Clark Development Corporation (CDC) and Clark International Airport Corporation (CIAC) Boards had decided to rename the Clark International Airport into the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport upon the initiatives given by Resolution No. 142, s. of 2000 of the Sangguniang Bayan of Mabalacat a similar Resolution of the Pampanga Press Club and another Resolution filed in Congress by Rep. Francis L. Nepomuceno (1st District, Pampanga);

WHEREAS, the so-called PIATCO deal contains several onerous provisions especially Section 3.b2 (Exclusivity) which provides that "with regard to CSEZ, GRP shall ensure that, until such time as the Development Facility Capacity shall have been consistently reached or exceeded for three (3) consecutive years during the Concession Period and Development Facility Capacity refers to the ten million (10,000,000) passengers capacity per year";

WHEREAS, same Section 3.02 provides that "(i) Clark International Airport shall not be operated beyond its design of Eight Hundred Fifty Thousand (850,000) passenger per annum and (ii) no new terminal facilities shall be operated therein";

WHEREAS, the same provision gives PIATCO the sole power to determine the ten million passenger capacity per year for three consecutive years which in effect provides a larger room to retard and limit infinitely the construction of any terminal facilities, which are necessary for the full operation of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport or DMIA whose original design capacity of 1,500,000 passenger per annum had been marginalized to a meager 850,000 passengers per annum;

WHEREAS, only the full operationalization of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport at the Clark Special Economic Zone could provide the impetus for the much-delayed take-off of the economy of Pampanga, Central Luzon in particular and the Philippines in general;

NOW THEREFORE:

Be it resolved by the Pampanga Mayor's League (PML) in meeting assembled to vehemently denounce the onerous provisions of the GRP-PIATCO Concession Agreement and appealing to Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines to amend the same by implementing the provisions of Republic Act No. 7227 and Executive Order No. 174 in making the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport fully operational as the premiere international airport of the Philippines, for reasons aforecited.

RESOLVED, further, that copies of this Resolution be furnished to Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and all others concerned for and in behalf of the Pampanga Mayor's League.

ADOPTED on 05 October 2001 upon motion of Mexico Mayor Ernesto Punzalan and duly seconded unanimously.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

(Sgd.) MARINO P. MORALES
Presiding Officer

ATTESTED:

(Sgd.) CATALINA BAGASINA
Secretary General, PML

(Sgd.) JOSE A. DAYRIT
Deputy Secretary General

Approved: 05 October 2001

MARINO P. MORALES President	ARTHALALILA Vice President (2nd District)	CATALINA BAGASINA Secretary General	PATERNO S. MAGCALAS Public Relation Officer	NORMITA L. EVANGELISTA Director	ERNESTO PUNZALAN Member	TISO LACANILAO Member
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‘More important than the Internet and pantyhose’

(From page A1)

people mover with no brakes, no engine, no gears and no steering wheel. It can carry the average rider for a full day, nonstop, on only five cents' worth of electricity.

Segway "will be to the car what the car was to the horse and buggy," Kamen told the magazine.

Time describes Segway as a self-balancing people mover, powered by batteries and controlled by tilt-sensors and five solid-state gyroscopes. It looks like a rotary lawnmower, but moves like magic and won't let you fall, Time insists.

It won't let you fall

Time's John Heilemann had tried out Segway and described in his article how he controlled the machine just by thinking about what movement he wanted it to make.

He got on the machine and made it move by leaning forward—it instantly rolled across the concrete. He stopped it just by conjuring an image of a red stop sign, "and just like that, Ginger and I come to a halt." He glided Segway in reverse by pirouetting in place with just a twist of his wrist.

"And no matter which way I lean or how hard, Ginger refuses to let me fall over," Heilemann said in his article.

Kamen predicts the machine will banish cars from the urban landscape to make room for millions of pedestrians on Segways.

He imagines them everywhere: in parks and at Disneyland, on battlefields and factory floors, but especially on downtown sidewalks from Seattle to Shanghai, Time said.

"Cars are great for going long distances," Kamen said. "But it makes no sense at all for people in cities to use 4,000-pound pieces of metal to haul their 150-lb asses around town."

‘More important than the Internet’

Kamen's brainchild launched a media storm in January when Inside.com, a media industry website, reported that Harvard Business School Press had paid $250,000 to an author, Steve Kemper, for a book about the mysterious invention.

Publisher Bob Metcalfe recently told ABC News that the invention was "more important than pantyhose. More important than the Internet."

Kamen, who trained as a physicist and engineer, filed several US Patent Office applications earlier this year for a motorized scooter-like vehicle.

Industry-wide speculation further suggests the scooter uses a clean-burning Stirling engine, which is powered by a gas transfer between a hot and cold element, for which Kamen has a patent.

His New Hampshire-based Deka Research and Development Corp. had also recently registered the website mysterlingscooter.com.

‘Like magic sneakers’

Kamen said his engineering marvel, developed at a cost of more than $100 million according to Time, has a near human response to movement. It uses "a gyroscope that acts like your inner ear, a computer that acts like your brain, motors that act like your muscles, wheels that act like your feet."

Describing the mechanics of walking as a controlled fall, he said: "Suddenly, you feel like you have on a pair of magic sneakers, and instead of falling forward, you go sailing across the room."

Kamen is a 50-year-old multimillionaire who previously invented a portable dialysis machine and a motorized wheelchair able to climb and descend stairs—the "Fred" companion to Ginger, an allusion to the fabled dance duo of Astaire and Rogers.

Cities to be built around Segway

Until now, he has kept mum about the product that Apple Computer tech guru Steve Jobs said would inspire urban planners to plan cities around it.

"The big idea," said Kamen, "is to put a human being into a system where the machine acts as an extension of the body."

Kamen admits that after nearly a year of hype, some people may be let down.

"It won't beam you up to Mars or turn lead into gold . . . So sue me," he said.

Time reports that a consumer model is expected to go on sale in about a year for around $3,000. A stronger, more expensive Segway, costing $8,000, will be available sooner but only to big-ticket customers like corporations and institutions.

Deka has constructed a 77,000-square-foot factory outside its Manchester, New Hampshire headquarters that will be able to produce 40,000 Segways a month by the end of next year. *AFP*

Oil field found in Malampaya, too

(From page A1)

coupled with the outcome of ongoing discussions with partners and the government will eventually determine whether subsequent long-term commercial production may be feasible," Greer said.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said the discovery was significant because the country was trying to wean itself away from the use of imported energy sources.

"We are very happy to hear that after almost 30 years we may have found a potentially commercial oil field," said Perez who visited the project site during the weekend.

The use of indigenous sources of fuel, particularly natural gas from the Malampaya field, would make the country 52 percent self-sufficient in energy, the statement said.

"If we include the use of local oil following this discovery, our self sufficiency in energy will further increase," Perez said.

Shell said the oil test beneath the Malampaya field was believed to be the "deepest horizontal subsea well test undertaken in the world" at a depth of about 850 meters (2,788 feet) below sea level.

The Malampaya field, the country's largest natural gas project, was launched in October. It has proven reserves of 78 billion cubic meters (2.6 trillion cubic feet).

Aside from Shell, the other investors in the gas project are US oil giant Texaco and state-owned Philippine National Oil Co.

The gas project is expected to provide up to 2,700 megawatts of power annually for 20 years, during which the government is expected to earn at least $8 billion in revenue.

Seven oil fields—all located northwest of Palawan—have been discovered in the country since 1979.

Four of the fields have shut down since 1998 due to very limited output. These are the West Linapacan, Tara, Galoc and Cadlao oil fields.

The remaining oil fields—Nido, Matinloc and North Matinloc—are still producing but their combined output has been limited to a total of 1,000 barrels per day—less than half a percent of the country's daily consumption of 340,000 barrels. ***With reports from AFP and Reuters***

Serge O under fire over ransom for Reghis

(From page A1)

to buy firearms which would be used to kill our soldiers?" Pichay added.

Like his other critics, Pichay also questioned Osmeña's timing.

"I would like to question the timing of his disclosure because if he had this information at the time the Senate was conducting its inquiry, why did he keep quiet then?" Pichay said.

Pichay said it could have saved the committee a lot of money because the committee went to Mindanao for an on-site investigation.

"I don't know what his motives are because as far as my sources are concerned, he was not really involved," he said.

Osmeña to testify

Osmeña had explained that he did reveal what he knew earlier because he did not want to undermine military operations against the Abu Sayyaf bandits.

He also pointed out that the timing for the disclosure was wrong. The Senate and House of Representatives were set to conduct parallel inquiries into allegations of military collusion with the Abu Sayyaf and of ransom payments.

Pichay challenged Osmeña not just to fully disclose the ransom payment but to help the government capture the Abu Sayyaf leaders.

Osmeña yesterday agreed to testify before the Senate on what he knew about the P17-million ransom payoff to the Abu Sayyaf bandits.

But Osmeña was reacting to the challenge not from Pichay but from a request from Sen. Ramon Magsaysay, chair of the committee on national defense and security, to disclose all information pertaining to the delivery and acceptance of ransom.

On Saturday, Osmeña admitted having facilitated the delivery of the ransom and how it reached the hands of the Abu Sayyaf.

According to Magsaysay, Osmeña will be called to testify at the final hearing by his committee on the alleged collusion between the Abu Sayyaf and some elements in the military.

"I trust that Senator Osmeña is armed with facts and can substantiate his revelations on the Lamitan incident as a highly regarded, duly elected senator of the country," he said.

Magsaysay referred to the military siege on the Abu Sayyaf bandits who were cornered in a Lamitan hospital on June 2. Nacorda said that the military allowed the bandits and their hostages to escape.

It was during this time that Romero and his two companions reportedly escaped their captors.

‘Lies’

Osmeña explained that he decided to finally tell all as he could no longer tolerate the "lies" being peddled by the military in connection with its alleged collusion with the bandits for monetary considerations.

While he observes inter-parliamentary courtesy, he believes Osmeña has to come clean, Pichay said.

"He should give full disclosure to the Senate since the committee has not come out with its report. He is answerable to his constituents," Pichay said.

He said it was up to the Senate ethics committee to investigate Osmeña.

"It is not for me to say. I will leave that to the Senate ethics committee to do the right thing," he said.

Pichay said Osmeña's claim would not have any bearing on his committee's report which is due for release on Wednesday, according to Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo, a member of Pichay's committee and chair of the nine-member technical working committee drafting the Lamitan report.

Pichay said there were two witnesses who testified to the committee that Romero paid ransom which Romero during the House hearings had strongly denied.

"It's the word of the witnesses against Romero," he said, refusing however to reveal the final findings of his committee.

Both the military and Romero had insisted that there was no ransom paid in exchange for their liberty.

Corroborate Nacorda

Osmeña said he would merely corroborate what had already been exposed by Fr. Cirilo Nacorda, parish priest of Lamitan, Basilan.

Magsaysay and some committee members also went to Basilan in August to listen to the testimony of Nacorda who claimed that the military had a part in the ransom deal.

"My colleague owes it to the people, especially the long-distressed residents of Lamitan who have been in search of truth and peace, to share his knowledge on the issue," he added.

Magsaysay's committee was about to call a TV reporter to a final hearing on the issue but this was rescheduled to give way to the Malacañang-certified anti-money laundering bill under the Senate committee on banks. The bill was signed into law on Sept. 29.

Military unaware

The military is not aware of any ransom being paid to the Abu Sayyaf, Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu said yesterday.

"The AFP never had any connection or knowledge of any ransom payment," Cimatu said when reporters asked for his comment on Osmeña's disclosure.

Cimatu also clarified that he just took over as Southcom chief two months ago.

Cimatu said the military was doing its best to rescue two Americans held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan for six months now.

Cimatu conceded that the military continued to face difficulty in reaching missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham as they and their abductors were hiding in a highly forested area.

Bad weather was also preventing government troops from reaching the area, he said.

"It's always raining there," Cimatu told reporters in the House where he attended a hearing called by the House committee on national defense yesterday.

He said government troops had an encounter recently with a group of Abu Sayyaf bandits and were able to recover 19 rounds of mortar ammunition.

"We're doing our best to finish the job as soon as possible," Cimatu added. ***With reports from Juliet Javellana, Cynthia Balana and Christine Avendaño***

Filipina dies in Israel bombings; 4 also hurt

(From page A1)

Vivas), his sister Maricar, Lily Basi (or Passi) and Mario Libao—were among the 40 injured and are being treated at the Ramban Hospital.

The Israeli government has pledged to shoulder the medical expenses of the injured Filipinos and facilitate the return of Reyes' body to the Philippines, Sto. Tomas said.

Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona said Philippine Embassy officials had contacted Reyes' next of kin in the port city of Haifa.

Carmel Hacoben, the Philippines' honorary consul in Haifa, said a team had been dispatched to assist the four injured Filipinos.

Rigoberto Tiglao, spokesperson for President Macapagal-Arroyo, told reporters that she was "saddened by such atrocity."

In its report yesterday to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila, the consular office said Raul Vibas had just come out of surgery and was out of danger; his sister was not in serious condition but needed surgery; Libao was in the intensive care unit; and Basi was undergoing surgery.

Beside the bomber

According to initial reports from the labor attaché in Israel, the Filipinos were aboard the public bus that exploded and ripped through another bus parked nearby.

Reuters said a Palestinian boarded the bus and blew himself up seconds later, turning the vehicle into a charred and mangled wreck.

Sto. Tomas said Raul Vibas sat right beside the bomber and witnessed him setting off the bomb before losing consciousness.

"He sat beside the man who eventually detonated the bomb," she said in a press briefing. "He even made eye contact and smiled at the man."

She said Raul Vibas, who had been in Israel for only five months, had become deaf as a result of the explosion.

Sto. Tomas said Reyes worked as a caregiver in Israel for seven months and was a member of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.

An Associated Press report quoted Reyes' aunt, Amy Arellano, as saying that Reyes was on her day off Sunday and was on her way to visit a friend.

Arellano said she had trouble identifying Reyes' mangled body and managed to do so only through her niece's ring and earring.

"She was a very lovable and cheerful person. She was like a daughter to me," said Arellano.

Sto. Tomas said that Reyes' children were eligible for scholarships and that the labor department would check whether her family would be able to collect insurance benefits.

There are 25,000 Filipino workers in Israel, about 75 percent of whom are working there illegally.

Saturday nightmare

Only on Saturday, two almost simultaneous bombings in a Jerusalem café turned a night out for dozens of teenagers into a nightmare, hurling victims and severed limbs through the air.

Ten people died and more than 150 were hurt, 17 critically.

The weekend bombings, just 12 hours apart, reminded Israelis of suicide attacks in rapid succession in early 1996 that killed dozens of Israelis in response to Israel's killing of a bombmaker with a booby-trapped cellular telephone.

The bombmaker belonged to the militant Islamic movement Hamas, which opposes Israel's existence.

Pressured by US President George W. Bush and Israel, Palestinian security forces rounded up militants across the West Bank and Gaza Strip to arrest those responsible for the weekend attacks, which were among the worst in 14 months of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

At least 742 Palestinians and 222 Israelis have now been killed since the start of the Palestinian uprising, which began shortly after peace talks stalled.

Palestinian security forces went out in large numbers after President Yasser Arafat imposed a state of emergency across the West Bank and Gaza, and Israel's army erected new checkpoints to tighten blockades imposed since the Palestinian revolt began.

Arafat's Palestinian Authority has condemned the weekend bombings and declared a state of emergency.

In a series of other measures, Arafat ordered the arrest of militants who had planned and carried out the attacks.

Palestinian security sources said more than 90 militants from Hamas and Islamic Jihad had been arrested since late Saturday in what appeared to be the Palestinian Authority's largest sweep since the Hamas bombings in 1996.

Hamas official Ismail Abu Shannab and Ismail Haniyah, the director of Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin's office, were among those detained, Palestinian security sources said.

The Palestinian Authority announced on television a ban on possessing weapons or holding demonstrations without a license, as well as using mosques as a forum "for political propaganda against the national goals."

Retaliation

From Washington, where he met Sunday with Bush, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon headed back to Israel to decide how to respond to the weekend attacks.

Sharon was expected to consult security chiefs at the airport before meeting senior Cabinet ministers. He is under pressure to retaliate fiercely to the suicide attacks.

An Israeli official said Washington knew that Israel would act "in the way it sees fit."

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said Washington was not about to tell Sharon what to do but that both sides must be aware of the consequences of any action. ***With reports from Reuters, AFP***

DILANGALEN

DIMAPORO

Erratum: Like Karen and Gina

(From page A1)

Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) was expected to intervene on behalf of Nur Misuari.

It turned out that the one I interviewed on the phone was not Dimaporo but Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen.

I learned of the mistake only yesterday afternoon when Dimaporo, whom I met for the first time, approached me to say he did not give that interview.

I showed Dimaporo my notes where I had written his residence telephone number.

Just to make sure, I called up the number again and found out that indeed, it was Dilangalen's home that I had called.

How mix-up happened

This was how the mix-up happened:

On Thursday, I followed up on the Misuari issue. He had been arrested and detained in Malaysia. What happens next, I wanted to know. So, I decided to interview Dimaporo, the chair of the House committee on Muslim affairs.

There was no session and the House reporters' regular recourse is to talk to our subjects by telephone.

I did not have the number of Dimaporo and called up the House trunkline 9315001 and asked to be connected to the office of Dimaporo.

When a woman answered, I asked if it was the office of Dimaporo, and the woman said yes. I introduced myself and asked where I could call up Dimaporo for an interview.

The woman gave me two telephone numbers—4307884 and 9520170.

I called up the numbers and when a woman answered, I asked if this was the residence of Congressman Dimaporo. The woman said yes. I introduced myself and asked if I could talk to Congressman Dimaporo about Misuari.

The woman said the congressman was still asleep and could I call back before 3 p.m. because by that time he would be up for his 3 p.m. prayers.

The second time I called, the same woman turned the phone over to the congressman. I asked: "Congressman Dimaporo?" He said "yes" and I introduced myself and conducted the interview.

Page 1 story

The news report, which basically said that if the Philippine government wanted peace in Mindanao, it had no choice but to grant Misuari immunity from prosecution. I also reported, based on my conversation with who I had thought was Dimaporo, that the OIC was inclined to intervene on behalf of the Moro rebel as it still recognized him as the leader of the MNLF. The story was published on Page 1 on Friday.

I told Dimaporo that I honestly thought he was the one I spoke to because I had specifically asked the House operator for his office. Of course, I had also asked the one who had answered what I believed was his phone in his House office and what I believed was his residence if I had reached Congressman Dimaporo, and had gotten confirmation.

Dimaporo position

Dimaporo said he wanted to deliver a speech to clarify his stand that he would be amenable to amnesty or immunity but only with conditions including the surrender of firearms.

"If ever amnesty is considered, there must be conditions. The government has to make sure that Misuari would not be a danger to society," Dimaporo said.

Dimaporo said the government must classify Misuari's offenses as criminal or political. He said political offenses could be granted pardon provided legal procedures were followed. But criminal offenses must be prosecuted.

Dimaporo said he agreed to the OIC mediating between the government and Misuari. "The OIC has been involved in the peace process and I think it should continue helping," he said.

Dimaporo and Dilangalen's positions on the Misuari problem are nearly identical. Dilangalen was proud that his position having made it to Page 1 generated informed debate on the issue. Unfortunately, the story had not been credited to him.

I talked to Dilangalen and he confirmed that he was the one I called up. I said sorry for the mix-up caused by the wrong transfer by the House operator.

I apologize to the INQUIRER readers. I apologize to the two congressmen. An honest mistake but not caused by a lapse of memory like Karen and Gina's grandfather.

‘Red’ hot lovers only

(From page A1)

dating agency in Britain to link would-be lovers by political persuasion.

Peter Shaw, who owns the agency in the northern city of Bradford, said it did not discriminate against anyone—except those to the right of center.

"I don't turn people away for age, disability or color," Shaw told Reuters.

"I don't turn people away unless they have the wrong politics. I would turn them away if they were conservatives."

The dating agency was set up a decade ago for left-wingers branded troublemakers by conventional agencies that are more used to delving into hobbies, hair colors and horoscopes.

Socialist Partners, which says it has been responsible for at least 25 marriages, is one of the cheapest dating agencies in the country that charges a fee of only 70 pounds ($100) a year—10 times cheaper than some other matchmakers.

But the agency, which offers discounts to the unemployed, has moved somewhat with the times, broadening its client base to allow in a few liberal democrats.

"We accept all left-wing people from center-left to far left. I've even got a few liberal democrats. That's about as far as I go," Shaw said.

Here comes trouble

Shaw, a sociology graduate, set up the agency 10 years ago after being snubbed by conventional agencies.

"I was treated as a potential troublemaker" he said.

His is not a crowded field.

Loving Links, a dating agency for married swingers, thinks all that dry debate over public policy will do little for the people on its books seeking "discreet extra-curricular dating."

"It's not something we think is relevant," said a spokesperson from the Dating Agency, a mainstream matchmaker.

Kate Corbett, whose Club Sirius seeks to attract "professional, career-minded people," said it steered clear of those with vehement politics.

"People who have very strong political views usually tend to find their partners within those groups," Corbett said.

"If someone rang up and said they only wanted to meet socialists, I would suggest they find new friends through that organization."

Trotskyite

But die-hard lefties disagree.

Donald Casson, who describes himself as a Trotskyite serial monogamist, joined Socialist Partners five years ago and met long-term partner Audrey, a member of the leftist Socialist Workers Party.

"It was the best relationship I've ever had," he said. "You're just much more likely to meet people you can get along with at Socialist Partners than at (mass-market agency) Dateline."

Yet gender gaps can still divide the best of political bedmates as un-PC gripes tumble out of right-on mouths.

"I do get some unreasonable requests from guys in their 60s who only want to meet girls in their 20s," said Shaw.

Nor are left-leaning women such angels, he said.

"Women are looking for a solvent partner who is taller than them," Shaw said.

"It even happens in left-wing agencies," he conceded. "You'd expect people to be more emotionally aware that people aren't commodities." ***Reuters***

FIL-AM GOLF

Home Metro ahead

BAGUIO CITY—Home Metro Manila carded 94 points yesterday to take the early lead in the Fil Division's Flight C in the 52nd Fil-Am International Golf Tournament at the 4,035-meter Baguio Country Club course here.

E.V. ESPIRITU

DAYRIT: Big winner.

Powered by Eduardo Gador's 28 points, which is the equivalent of an eight over par 69 in medal play, Home Metro Manila paced Baguio City Council, Jetha Valley and Baguio Miners Benguet Corp. by eight points.

Over at the nearby 69, 5,001-meter John Hay Golf Club course, Villa Cacho scored 88 to pace the Am Division Flight C while the Guam Kool Swingers shot 101 to lead Flight D.

Home Metro Manila and Villa Cacho, however, had to share the limelight with Joel M. Dayrit of the Duty Free Philippines team in the world's biggest amateur tournament in terms of participants.

Dayrit, president of the Daymont Marketing Corporation, shot a hole-in-one at the par three, 166-yard 18th hole of the Country Club to become the tournament's first big winner.

Raul Gonzales and Dante Tejada backed up Gador with 23s while the fourth scorer for Home Metro Manila, starring some of top Philippine National Police golfers, was either Dennis Canoy or Wilson Amper, who made 20 apiece in the five-to-play, four-to-count event.

In the Am Division's Flight C competition also at the Country Club, Wallace Golf Team scored 89 points to take a slim lead over Guam Kook Swingers and Super B, who made 87 each.

Baguio City Council, Jetha Valley and Baguio Miners Benguet Corp. towed Aguinaldo 320 Golf Club with 84 and NBI and Information Professionals Inc. with 81 apiece in the Fil Division's Flight C.

In achieving his second ace in three years, Dayrit, now on his 12th year playing for Enchong Formoso's Duty Free team, won a Wilson Staff golf set.

Dayrit used a Wilson Staff No. 1 ball and a No. 8 Callaway iron and was in the same flight with Mayor Vergara, Macabud's Roger Santander and Ram Master-Tiger Beer's Jay Borromeo.

Vergara later invited Dayrit for lunch.

Dayrit, whose first ace came during a monthly Philippine Navy tournament in 1999, started his round from the back nine. Despite getting six points for the ace, he could only get 12 more the rest of the round.

"I continued my round on the first tee still trembling all over," he said. "I had an ace before but it's different when you get another in a major like the Fil-Am."

In the Stableford scoring, more known locally as PAL system, a bogey is worth one point, par two, three birdie, four eagle, five double eagle and six hole-in-one.

Green Water Meadows made 85 points to take fourth place in Flight D, followed by Hard Rock Café 84, Golf Club Seoul Survivors 78, Publicis AAV Builders 77 and PAGA International 75.

Fil-Am aura

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

BAGUIO CITY—By nature, man loves tradition. We do not change that easily. We do not accept change that easily. Nice one, isn't it? You succumb to change in an instant and you value not the work of people who had come ahead of you. In a way, respecting tradition is respecting your roots, culture.

You move on, yes, but move on with a high regard for things that have been there for ages. Never take them for granted. Treat them with care. Tradition is like a river: its permanence flows endlessly.

One tradition we treat with reverence is the Fil-Am Golf Championship. Established in 1949, the Fil-Am has become part and parcel of everything Baguio. It's synonymous to this charming city atop a mountain. No golf tournament can ever overshadow the Fil-Am's mystic. That is why if officials of the Guinness Book of World Records continue to herald the fact that the Fil-Am is the world's most attended golf tournament in the world, cheers to that. If not anymore, fine. The Fil-Am can stand on its own. Always.

Over the last few years, organizers have been transforming the Fil-Am into a world-class event—thanks to such guys like Anthony R. de Leon, Rico Agcaoili and, most recently, Shean Bedi. Anthony, of course, is the deputy general manager of the Baguio Country Club while Rico is BCC president. Shean? Well, Shean is Camp John Hay's gem of a contribution to the Fil-Am.

Big-name golfers never miss joining the Fil-Am, which is practically where both the nation's top guns and duffers in amateur golf converge every year.

I am not a Fil-Am participant. Never been. There's nobody yet crazy enough to invite me to his team. But covering it, just by being into it, gives me a thrill. The Fil-Am's aura is deathless.

To my fellow golfers then, here's a glass to a tournament that is the envy of all.

Abenojar rules Truck Challenge

DALE Abenojar of the Land Rover Club outshone veteran 4x4 drivers as he ruled the 1st Philippine Tough Truck Challenge yesterday at the Fort Bonifacio Global City.

Abenojar, a 38-year-old Tanay, Rizal native who is also an Xtreme Challenge enthusiast, exploited his experience as a professional mountain guide in hurdling the treacherous terrain of the obstacles aboard his truck named "ReoRover" as he clocked a combined time of 2:37.51 in both tracks.

"I'm so happy I won," said Abenojar, the first Filipino to cross the top of Mt. Banahaw and Mt. Apo using a motorcycle.

He is aiming to become the first Filipino to reach Mt. Kilimanjaro in February or March in cooperation with BBC's Adam Brooks.

The double V obstacle proved to be most challenging portion of the event presented by Red Horse Beer and sponsored by Caltex-Delo and Tide in cooperation with Ride, 199 Off Road House, Premiere Ready Mix and the National Association of Filipino Off-Roaders Inc. (NAsFOR).

Garcia outplays Els, captures $2M

SUN CITY, South Africa—Spaniard Sergio Garcia sank a chip shot from the fringe on the first hole of a sudden-death playoff with South Africa's Ernie Els to win the $ 4.06 million Nedbank Golf Challenge on Sunday.

The world No. 5 took home $ 2 million.

"Every victory is great but with the field so strong, it was really good to win," Garcia said. "I lost two playoffs this year, so I really needed to show myself I could win one."

Garcia and Els were tied at 20-under-par 268 after 72 holes of regulation when a dramatic hailstorm interrupted play during the final few holes of the tournament at the Gary Player Country Club. *AP*

The Tradition fires off at Eastridge GC today

TEN of the country's most exclusive clubs field their all-star lineups in a competition where nothing but pride is at stake in the seventh staging of The Tradition starting today (Tuesday, Dec. 4) at the Eastridge Golf Club in Binangonan, Rizal.

The Eastridge leg will kick off a tour of three venues for the 160 low handicappers in the roster who will also play Canlubang on Thursday, Dec. 6 and Sta. Elena on Friday (Dec. 7)

Sta. Elena is the defending champion and carrying the war for the Cabuyao club are Jingy Tuason, Dickie Dizon and Herbert Chan.

An interesting shootout looms with many-time champion Luisita and Canlubang getting the same talents who have given them numerous major championships in the past like the PAL Interclub and the Fil-Am.

Francis Gaston and Iggy Clavecilla, both of whom spell consistency for their teammates, power Luisita while ex-pro Rolly Viray, former national player Abe Rosal and Mari Hechanova spearhead the crack Canlubang charge.

Each team is allowed a maximum of 16 players with four each to play in Group I, Group II, Group III and seniors with the best three scores counting.

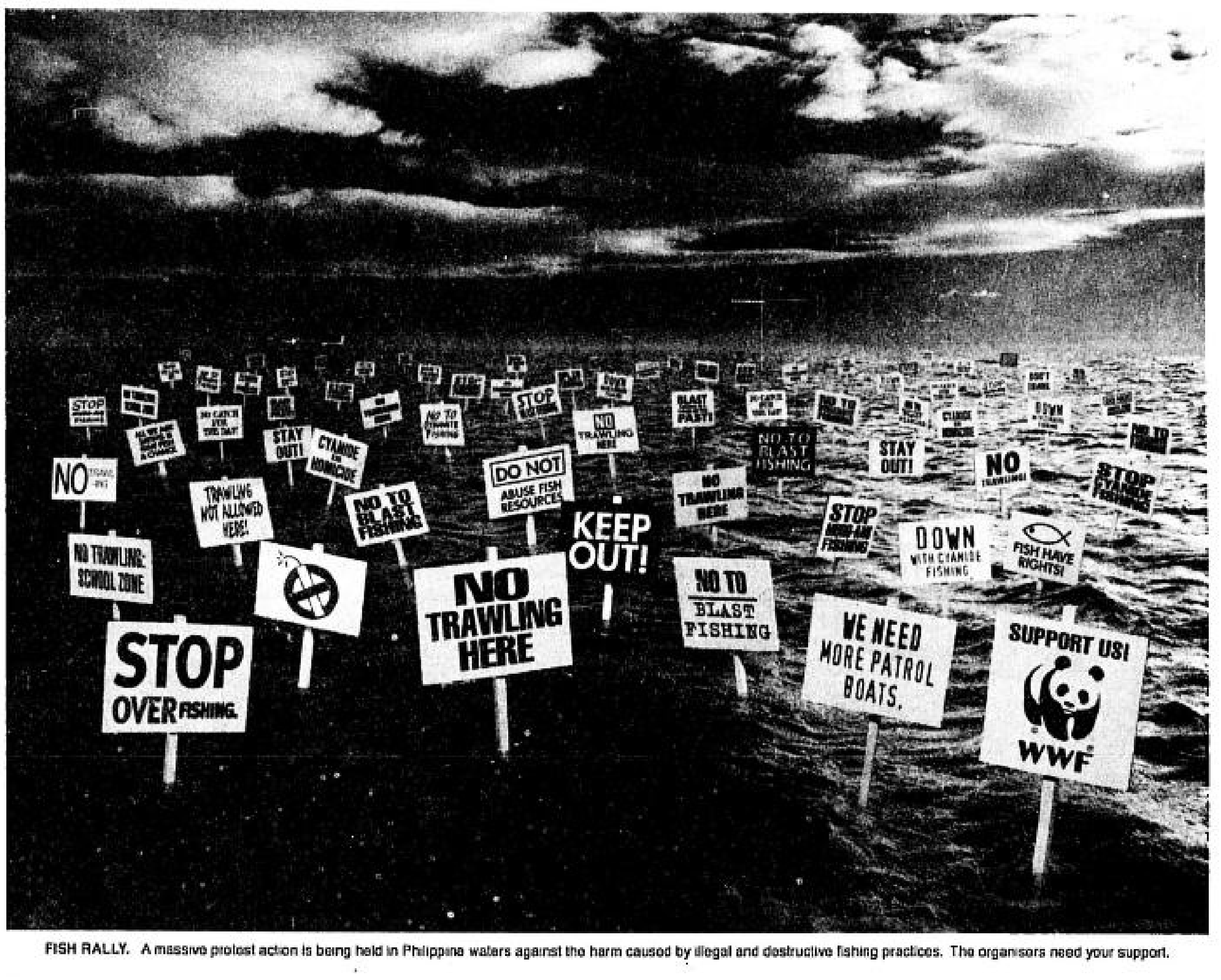
As per tradition format, teams will be going for the bigger points in each grouping with first place worth 10 points, second 9, third eight all the way down to last place which gets just a point. The club with the most number of points after three days will be declared champion.

The Tradition was launched six years ago with the objective of reviving the purist concept of golf where clubs and individual play for the love of the game minus the usual perks like trophies and raffle prizes.

The other teams seeing action are Eastridge, Wack Wack, Manila Southwoods, Orchard, Valley, Forest Hills and Alabang.

Canlubang appears the toughest team with the lowest average in terms of handicap. But Luisita's strength lies on its Group I and seniors crew led by Allan Gaston, Carlo Gamban and Alex Montelibano.

Although their frontliners are in the Fil-Am, Southwoods and Forest Hills will still try to put up a decent fight the same with an undermanned Wack Wack.



FISH RALLY. A massive protest action is being held in Philippine waters against the harm caused by illegal and destructive fishing practices. The organisers need your support.

JUNGOLFERS' CLUB

Noted teaching pro Bong Lopez (far right) and Chucho Martinez (left) supervise the graduation ceremonies of the first batch of The Golf Authority Jungolfers Club for basic and advanced courses at Riviera recently. The batch includes Nicole Angeles, Charlene Abalos, Mariele Aznar, Ina Batara, Katya dela Cruz, Tifanny Conde, Erin Feliciano, Katrina Gonzales, Bianca Lorenzana, Annika Martinez, Nicole Martinez, Alexine Narvasa, Aly Narvasa, Isabel Pineda, Pauline Ponciano, Christine Potenciano, Cynthia Santos, Nicole Serapio, Pauline Sotto, Linnel de Villa and Debbie de Villa.

2 RP netters ousted

FILIPINO wild cards Adelo Abadia and Michael Mora III were eliminated at the start of the US$15,000 Tru-flex ITF Philippines Men's Futures yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Abadia, the country's No. 1 player, bowed to German Leif Meineke, 4-6, 2-6, while Mora succumbed to South African Coenie Van Wyk, 0-6, 4-6.

The two losses left Johnny Arcilla and Joseph Victorino as the only locals in the 32-man main draw of this event supported by the ITF Grand Slam Development Fund, Tru-flex Tennis Court Surfacing, PSC, Viva Mineral Water, Manila Midtown Hotel and official ball Wilson.

Arcilla is scheduled to play against Japanese Toshihide Matsui while Victorino will meet Portuguese Gilberto Alvarez, who scored a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Indon Hendri Susilo Pramono in the final qualifying.

In other first-round results, fourth seed Bulgarian Radoslav Lukaev rallied past Korean Baek Seung-Bok, 4-6, 7-5, 6-1, while Korean Lee Seung-Hun downed compatriot Park Seung-Kyu, 6-2, 6-1.

Seeing action today are No. 2 Slovak Juraj Hasko against German Maximillian Abel, No. 3 and first leg champion Daniel Andersson against Taiwanese qualifier Chan Ti.

NBA RESULTS

Boston 85, Toronto 69; Memphis 93, Philadelphia 87; Dallas 120, Sacramento 114, OT; Seattle 97, Milwaukee 83; L.A. Clippers 103, Indiana 72. *AP*

SPORTSWATCH

Dytoc keeps tenpin lead

BENNY Dytoc kept the lead after the third round of the 2nd Pepsi-GameworX Tenpin Bowling Classic tournament, while Arianne Cerdena also shone yesterday at GameworX StriXe, Festival Supermall, Filinvest Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Dytoc submitted a total of 4,970 pinfalls to pace Lippi Uy who had 4,981 pinfalls. Cerdena, a GameworX bet, surprised the field by grabbing third spot with 4,928 pinfalls. The tournament that offers P50,000 worth of gift certificates to the winner. Defending champion Angelo Constantino was a bit shaky in the third round, slipping to ninth spot with 4,781 pinfalls in a tie with Willy Natividad. Other bowlers who made it to the top 10 were: Amphel Alvarez 4,834; Ven Aptasin 4,824; Biboy Rivera 4,819; Elly Olivarez 4,785; Al y 4,768 pinfalls.

Aussie Davis Cuppers shattered

MELBOURNE, Australia— Australia's Davis Cup players admitted Monday they were shattered by their traumatic defeat to France in Sunday's final. And Todd Woodbridge called on the International Tennis Federation to give the two finalists a first-round bye. As it is, Australia face a trip to Argentina on February 8 while France are at home to the Netherlands. "You don't even get a chance to soak it up before you're playing again in a first-round match," Woodbridge said. World No.1 Lleyton Hewitt, who recovered from losing the opening rubber to Nicolas Escude to pull Australia level at 2-2 by beating Sebastien Grosjean, defended the decision to play Rafter alongside him in the doubles. *AFP*

Anand, Adams to 4th round

MOSCOW —The top two seeds at the Fide world chess championship, defending champion Viswanathan Anand of India and Michael Adams of England, won their playoffs Sunday to advance into the fourth round. In the first rapid playoff game, Anand's opponent, Vladislav Tkachiev of France, appeared to have a small advantage with the white pieces. But after long maneuvering, Anand won. Anand then drew the second rapid game to advance. Adams won both of his games against Russia's Vadim Zvjaginsev. In the other rapid playoffs, Evgeny Bareev of Russia defeated his countryman Konstantin Sakaev, Joel Lautier of France beat former Fide champion Alexander Khalifman of Russia, and Zurab Azmaiparashvili of Georgia eliminated Rustam Kazimdzanov of Uzbekistan. *AP*

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SPORTS

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SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Missouri vs Saint Louis at 8 a.m. (r – 5 p.m.) on ESPN

GOLF: Nedbank Golf Challenge 2001, Day Two at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

U.S. Open, Final Round at 10 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

TENNIS: Masters Series - The Ericsson Open Highlights at 11 a.m. (r – 9 p.m.) on Star Sports

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL - Green Bay Packers vs Jacksonville Jaguars at 10 a.m. (r – 8:30 p.m.) on ESPN

BATANG PINOY GAMES

Karateka lifts Cebu on top

BY MARC ANTHONY REYES

BACOLOD CITY—Zamboanga City scored two of four golds at stake yesterday in karatedo but it was Adela Mabala's victory that mattered a lot, catapulting Cebu Province to overall leadership with five gold medals in the Philippine National Youth Games-Batang Pinoy here.

Mabala defeated Jelly Eso in the girls kumite for 10 years old and below to hand Cebu Province the top spot during the karatedo action at the Talisay Sports and Cultural Center.

Cebu Province won four golds Sunday through the exploits of the Games' one of two multiple gold medal winners, 9-year-old Jenesa Vergara, who won the kata and kumite categories for 8-10 years old. Lovely Valesa (kata, 12 years) and James Montesclaros (boys 12 years) also got a gold each for their province.

That put Cebu Province ahead of second-runners Manila, Zamboanga City, Bacolod City and Zambales, which have two gold medals to show each.

Cebu City and Muntinlupa City each scored a gold medals in gymnastics with 8-year-old Joanna Mae Opal Liesol winning the horse vault and Edely Abel topping the floor exercise, respectively.

Zamboanga's karatekas dominated yesterday's events with Angelo Fernandez ruling the boys kumite for 9-year olds and Jonamarie Galevez taking the gold in girls kumite for 9-year olds. Nueva Ecija's Jonathan Sotto prevailed in the boys kumite for 10 years old to give his province its first gold.

Other gold medal winners last Sunday were Dina Trabucou of Davao del Norte in the baseball throw for girls, Manila dancesports pairs William Dave Bernardino and Cynthia Tajon in juvenile standard and juvenile latin, Muntinlupa gymnast Danica Calapitan in individual all-around and Cebu City's Renafina Lepasana in individual all-around.

Zambales' gold medal haul came from another double gold medal winner, karateka Glan Paolo Navor who copped the titles in boys kata and kumite for 8-10 years.

Alexandria Anacan of Rizal (kata, 11 years) George Segundo Jr. of Baguio City (kata boys, 11 years) and Joesa Mae Duran of Bacolod City (kumite, 8 years) also took home golds late Sunday.

Athletics events were halted yesterday to give way for the track and field competition for differently abled athletes. Bacolod City tallied 14 out of 24 gold medals disputed in the side event for mentally, visually and hearing impaired athletes.

Alas resigns as Pals coach

IT'S now official, Louie Alas is out as Talk N Text coach.

In a statement faxed to the INQUIRER, Phone Pals team manager Frankie Lim said the parting of ways, which has been circulating the past month, was a mutual decision by both parties.

"We have nothing but the highest regard for Louie Alas. He is a great person and an outstanding individual. We don't rule out working with him again in the furture," said Iggy Yenko, the team's PBA governor and board representative and current PBA chair.

Alas, on the other hand, said: "I felt that I had done as much as I could for the team and that it was time to move on. The Phone Pals are a talented team with a very supportive management. I believe they have a great future and I wish them well."

As to his immediate plans, Alas said he intends to proceed to the United States to observe coaching techniques in the NBA and various colleges.

Among those being considered to replace him are Franz Pumaren, who steered the La Salle Green Archers to four straight UAAP championships, and Shell mentor Perry Ronquillo, who has an expiring contract, and Pop Cola coach Chot Reyes.

Roy Luarca

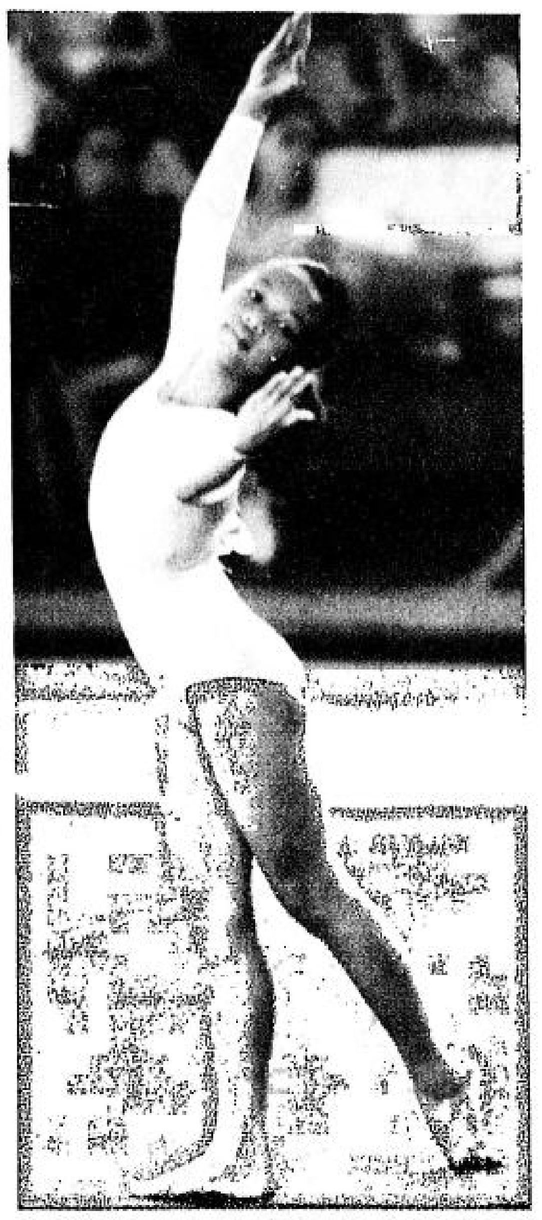
Energy Kings test Archers today

GAMES TODAY (Makati Coliseum)
3:30 p.m.—Welcoat vs Ateneo-Pioneer
5:30 p.m.—Shark vs ICTSI-Archers

IT'S the turn of defending champion Shark Energy Drink to try and bring International Container Terminal Services Inc-Archers crashing back to earth in the PBL Challenge Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

Shark battles ICTSI at 5:30 p.m. today, with the Energy Kings eyeing to avoid what happened previously to highly-favored Welcoat Paints and Blu Detergent Kings.

Dennis Eroa



VANIA Ina Roldan of Muntinlupa performs during the gymnastics competition of the Batang Pinoy Games yesterday. Roldan settled for the silver medal in the floor exercise. ROMY HOMILLADA

FedEx cagers prevail

GAMES TODAY
10 am Cho Pat vs FedEx-RP Men's Team
11:30 am Wang's BC vs Spring Oil

THE FedEx-RP Men's Team crushed multi-titled Wang's Ball Club, 84-73 to begin its campaign on a blazing note yesterday at the start of the National Basketball League (NBL) Presidential Cup at the University of Manila gym.

Rolly Menor showed the way for the nationals with 23 points, Ryan Bernardo shot 16 points while Michael Manego had 13 in carrying the national quintet to the 11-point blasting of Wang's ball Club.

The Johnny Tam-mentored national quintet used its youth and experience to break away from a five-point halftime lead.

"So far so good. This team is a mixture of our youth players and the team that represented the country to the Jones Cup. I am glad to see how our young members are gaining much from this exercise," said Tam who also steered the RP Youth team to the NBL's second conference title last year.

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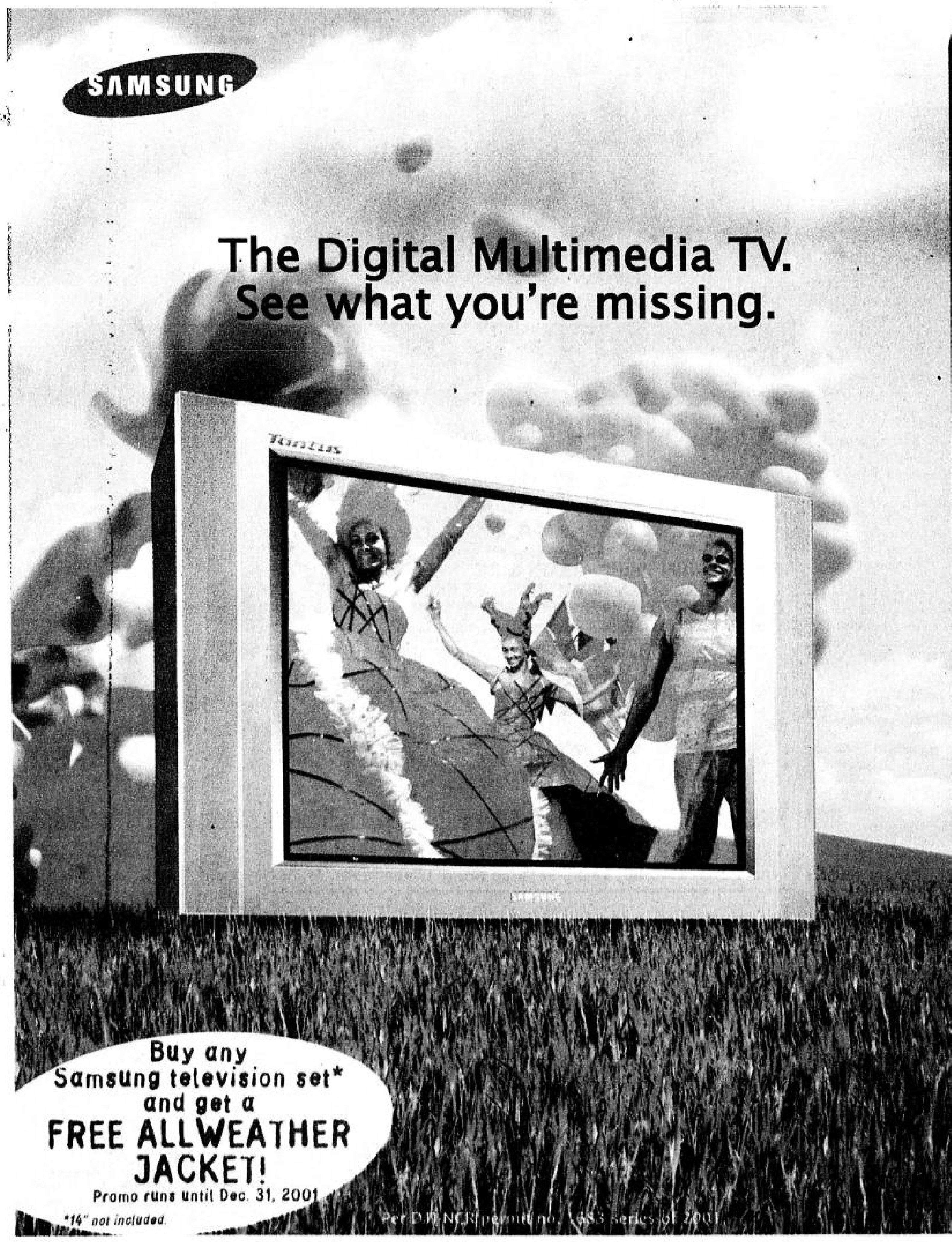

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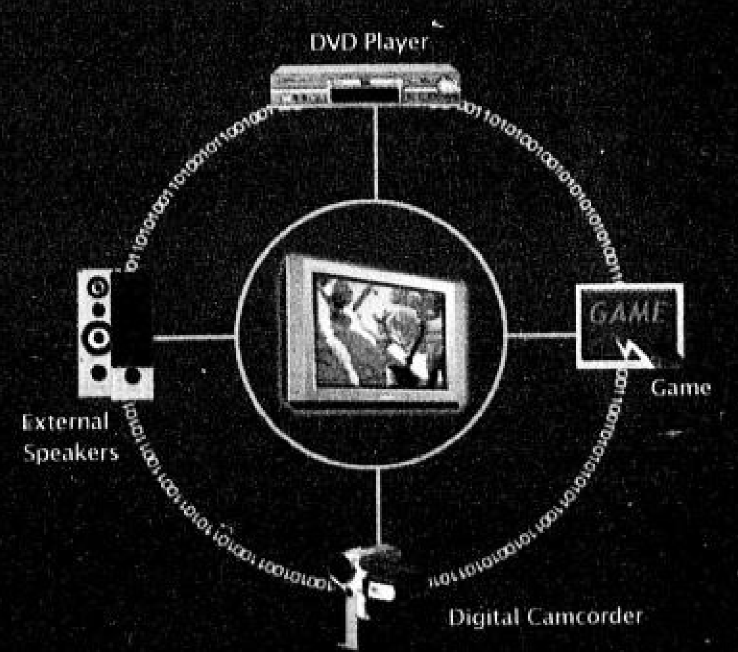

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'Fall guys' want Chua murder raps dropped A20
Amok kills neighbor A20

METRO
LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

CHURCH AND COMMERCE
Business picked up a little for vendors as a Marian procession was held in Intramuros featuring scores of richly garbed images of the Virgin Mary, early Sunday night. JOAN BONDOC

'Carnapper' remark on TV earns Osang libel charge

BY NELSON F. FLORES

ROCES

GOVERNMENT prosecutors filed libel charges against actress Rosanna Roces for describing a businessman as a "carnapper" on national television early this year.

Government lawyers said there is enough prima facie evidence to warrant the filing of the case against Roces—Jennifer Molina in real life—before the Pasig City Regional Trial Court.

Judge Abraham Boretta of RTC Branch 154 will preside over the case.

Records showed that Joselito Manlongat filed the libel case against Roces after she called him a "carnapper" during the July 7 episode of "Star Talk," a show business show at GMA 7 where Roces is one of the hosts.

Manlongat said Roces has no good intention and justifiable motive for making the remark. He said the remark caused him dishonor, besmirched his reputation and discredited him.

In answer to a question of one of her co-hosts in Star Talk, Roces was quoted as saying: "*Si* Jojo Manlongat *'yon, 'yung* carnapper (That is Jojo Manlongat, the car thief)."

But in her counter-affidavit, Roces said Manlongat has only himself to blame for his bad reputation. She maintained that her remark was "spontaneous" and that she only said it because it was really how she knew him.

Manlongat is suspected to be a member of the Valle Verde Gang, also known as the Fianza Gang, an allegedly criminal syndicate believed to be responsible for a series of car thefts in Metro Manila. Some of the members of the gang were arrested last year by members of the now defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force.

Matibag aide one of Cinco gunmen, investigators say

ERIK ARAZAS

FORMER Comelec worker Robles is brought to the NBI in Manila.

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA AND MICHAEL LIM UBAC

THE AIDE and driver of former Commission on Elections director Angelina Matibag was yesterday identified as one of the two gunmen in the killing of Comelec director Velma Cinco.

Mario V. Francisco, driver of Matibag, has not been arrested, said Senior Supt. Federico Castro, chief of the Western Police District-Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit.

The National Bureau of Investigation said the bureau would invite Matibag because her name "keeps popping up" in the course of the investigation.

But NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said they would invite Matibag only if evidence would warrant it.

Also yesterday, Conrado Robles, former casual employee of Comelec, was indicted for Cinco's murder after Manila city prosecutors found probable cause against him.

Wycoco said witnesses pointed to Robles as one of Cinco's assailants.

He said Cinco's son Carlo and sister Marian Jayme told NBI investigators that before her death, Cinco had received death threats from Matibag.

Another witness, a Comelec employee, said that on Nov. 9, he overheard Matibag saying, "*Palayasin ninyo ang bobong babaing iyan* (referring to Cinco), *babarilin ko iyan, lahat ng sasama sa kanya isasama ko sa hukay*," Wycoco added.

MATIBAG AIDE/ A20

Kind strangers will help anyone, celebrities or not

BY YOLANDA FUERTES,
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—Actor Vandolph Quizon may owe his life to a friendly neighborhood and passing strangers who helped him, his girlfriend and two male companions following a car accident last week in Pozurrubio town.

But the Good Samaritans are not expecting anything in return, saying they are willing to help anyone, celebrities or not.

To show his gratitude, ace comedian Dolphy, Vandolph's father, promised to shoulder the hospital and medical expenses of truck driver Ronnie Ulpindo and his companions, Jefferson Ulpindo, Grace Cabado and Manny Bulalia.

The three men and one woman were on board the truck that collided with the van that Vandolph was driving.

Truck owner Pablo Sim, who is based in Rosales town, told the Inquirer that Dolphy's representative, Ted Ricafort, arrived here Tuesday to assure him that Dolphy would pay the driver's hospital bills.

"(Ricarfort) told us not to worry about the bills," Sim said. "He also visited Ronnie in the hospital."

Jefferson Ulpindo, Cabado and Eulalia were treated for minor injuries and were discharged from the hospital last week. They paid their own bills amounting to almost P15,000.

"When we rushed to the accident site to rescue the victims, we were not thinking of any reward," said barangay health worker Aida Turino, 45. "We were there only to help."

Turino brought Vandolph's girlfriend, Desiree Raquiza, to the Sacred Heart Hospital in Urdaneta City.

Barangay Rosario chief Remigio Morales and other village officials stayed at the accident site until the police had made sure that nothing was missing in the two vehicles.

"We are always ready to help anyone," Morales said, adding that Dolphy, his partner Zsa Zsa Padilla and Vandolph's stepfather, Parañaque Mayor Marquez, arrived at the Sacred Heart Hospital and thanked them for helping Vandolph and his companions.

Turino took Vandolph's clutch bag from the actor's companion Allan Araza, who was also injured, and turned it over to Dolphy at the hospital. The contents of the clutch bag were intact, according to actress Alma Moreno, Vandolph's mother.

Turino, whose house is located near the accident site, said she thought nobody survived the accident because Vandolph's Ford pick-up and Sim's Isuzu Elf were totally wrecked.

Turino's neighbors helped open the Ford pick-up's door using crowbars and a cable pulled by a van owned by another resident, Antonio Malaso.

"Araza, the driver who was seated in the pick-up's backseat, crawled out first and announced that Vandolph was trapped inside," Turino said.

The villagers next pulled out Raquiza and Vandolph.

A passing car driven by Ian Estandian from Caba, La Union stopped at the site

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'Fall guys' want Chua murder raps dropped

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE FOUR cadets linked to the abduction and murder of University of Santo Tomas student Mark Welson Chua were fall guys, according to their legal counsel.

Lawyer Serafin Rivera urged the Department of Justice to drop the murder charges against Paul Joseph Tan, Michael Rainard Manambao, Eduardo Tabrilla, and Patrick Christopher Cruz since the National Bureau of Investigation allegedly failed to establish their involvement in Chua's killing in March.

"Not a single witness was presented before the DOJ investigating prosecutor that could attest to the fact that the respondent cadet officers participated in any manner in the alleged murder of Chua," Rivera said in a statement.

Two new witnesses have surfaced and implicated three more cadets in the case, the victim's father, Welson Chua, told the Inquirer yesterday.

Welson refused to identify the witnesses and the three cadets. He said Cruz had already been dropped from the case since the new witnesses did not link him to the killing.

Rivera urged the NBI to conduct a thorough investigation and determine the mastermind of Chua's killing if only to give "real justice" to the slain UST cadet officer and his family.

Three witnesses had claimed in affidavits that they saw the respondents inside the UST Reserve Officers Training Corps office, conducting "initiation rites" on a man hogtied and whose head was wrapped in packing tape.

Chua was wrapped in a carpet and his head was wrapped in packing tape when his body was fished out of the Pasig River on March 18.

Rivera said the statements of witnesses failed to show that his clients had conspired with another murder suspect, T/Sgt. Genesis Binagatan, in abducting and killing Chua.

Binagatan is facing murder charges before the Manila Regional Trial Court after he was supposedly seen dumping Chua's body in the Pasig River.

Binagatan belonged to the staff of the UST commandant, Army Maj. Demy Tejares, who was relieved from his post after Chua exposed the alleged irregularities in the school's ROTC program.

Thermoselect firm declares 'victory' over Greenpeace

By Christian V. Esguerra

THREE weeks after Greenpeace Philippines threatened to present solid evidence against the garbage technology called thermoselect, the environmental group has yet to produce concrete proof that the technology will endanger the environment.

And instead of holding its breath, Interstate Waste Management Inc., local project coordinator for the European consortium that proposed thermoselect to local officials as a solution to the garbage problem in Metro Manila, has declared victory over Greenpeace.

Roger van den Berge, Interstate's consultant for the Philippines, yesterday said Greenpeace's inability to make good its threat "only means that they don't have any evidence against thermoselect. It's been three weeks since they threatened to come up with evidence (and) still they can't produce anything substantial."

He said Greenpeace merely based its so-called evidence on "rumors and unverified" reports contained in articles circulating on the Internet. Van den Berge also furnished Inquirer copies of these articles.

The articles, mostly translated from German into English, contained previous reports that thermoselect factories in Europe had been closed down for supposed violation of environmental laws. Van den Berghe pointed out that so far, Greenpeace has yet to produce authentic documents proving these reports, including earlier allegations that former thermoselect officials had been jailed abroad for alleged bribery and violation of environmental laws.

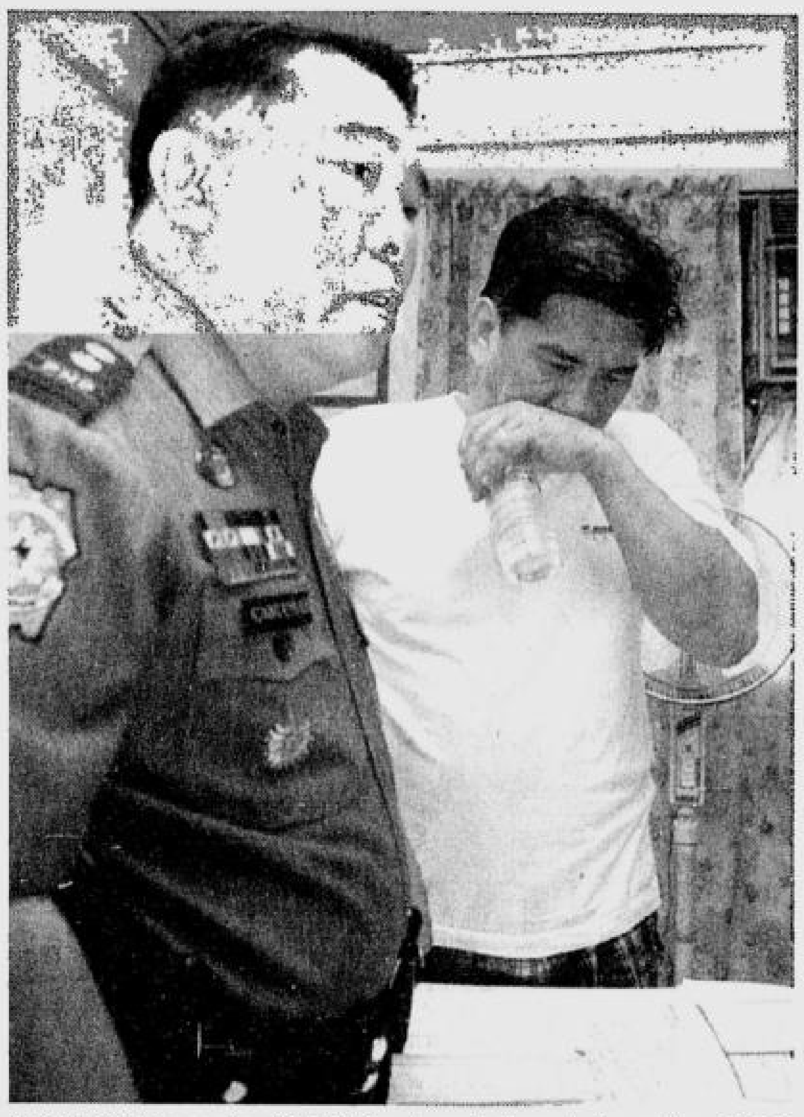
Thermoselect is a waste disposal technology that uses high temperature to recycle garbage and has passed the most exacting environmental measures, especially in Germany, Van den Berghe claimed.

At least 20 countries are currently planning to adopt the technology since it has passed their respective clean air laws, he added.

In the Philippines, Metro Manila mayors led by Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez were pushing for thermoselect as an immediate solution to the mounting garbage crisis in the metropolis.

Van den Berghe said Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte had recently invited Interstate to make a presentation about the technology.

Metro Manila Development Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. had also earlier asked Greenpeace to prove its allegations against thermoselect so that the Department of Energy and Natural Resources can make its fair assessment of the technology.



SUSPECT Fernandez (right) tries to cool down in the office of CPD Station 9 commander Guillermo Cabuenas. DENNIS SABANGAN

Amok kills neighbor

A MAN, who was reported to be a relative of a police general, ran amuck early yesterday morning and shot dead a neighbor and injured another in Quezon City.

Police identified the suspect as Fedelino Fernandez, 46, of Barangay Claro, Quezon City. He was said to be a relative of Chief Supt. Efren Fernandez, chief of the Philippine National Police Narcotics Command.

Victim Ricardo Vidamo, 23, succumbed to a gunshot wound in the neck while undergoing surgery at the Quezon City Medical Center.

The other victim, Narciso Ausad, sustained a gunshot wound in the back, with the bullet exiting through his stomach. He was in critical condition at the Quirino Memorial Medical Center, police said.

Investigation showed that the shooting happened around 2 a.m. Monday on Aguho Street in Barangay Claro, when Fernandez allegedly began firing indiscriminately his .45 caliber pistol.

Chief Insp. Alfredo Roxas, head of the Drug Enforcement Unit of the Central Police District Station 9, said on radio that Fernandez claimed he was a police agent pursuing the two victims, who he said were drug pushers.

The two victims, however, were not on the DEU's watch list, according to Roxas. *Agnes E. Donato*

Kind strangers . . .

(From page A19)

and volunteered to bring Raquiza to the hospital.

Another passing car, reportedly owned by a Department of Education employee in Binalonan town, brought Vandolph to the hospital.

Malaso and another resident, Maximiano Ramirez, brought Araza, Ruel Biong and the Isuzu Elf's driver and his three companions to the hospital, according to Turino.

Until last week, however, Vandolph's bills at the Sacred Heart Hospital in Urdaneta City - amounting to P80,000 - reportedly had not been settled. The hospital initially charged P100,000 but it was reduced after Urdaneta Mayor Amadeo Perez Jr. intervened, the Inquirer learned.

A copy of the hospital bills of Vandolph, his girlfriend and their two drivers were faxed to the office of Vandolph's stepfather, Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez. ***With a report from Gobleth Moulic, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Pasig Citiland foundation found eroded

By Nelson F. Flores

PASIG City Mayor Soledad Eusebio urged the occupants of townhomes in a part of the city to vacate their units after city building officials discovered the severe erosion of the soil foundation of the buildings.

Eusebio yesterday told the INQUIRER that at least 37 units of Citiland along Lanuza Street in Barangay Orambo would have to be vacated until the developer has corrected the erosion.

She said notices to vacate the premises were issued last week.

She said there is a danger that the townhouses, which were built in the 1980s on the edge of a cliff near the Philsport Arena (formerly Ultra), would collapse, just like what happened to the Cherry Hills Subdivision in Antipolo City.

"The notices to vacate were issued by my office as a preventive measure," Eusebio explained.

She said building officials who regularly inspect high-rise buildings in the city noted the severe erosion at the cliff and the huge cracks it caused on the retaining walls of the townhouses. She said the only thing preventing the collapse of the structures is the retaining wall, which is now severely damaged.

She warned that if the buildings collapse, they would fall on residents of Valle Varde, a village located at the foot of the eroded cliff. Quoting city building officials, she estimated that it would take at least P40 million to repair the damage caused by the erosion.

Eusebio said Citiland tenants should sue the developer of their townhouses and the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board for neglect.

She said the townhouses should not have been built on the edge of the cliff and that the developers should have foreseen this problem.

The Inquirer also received reports that building defects were found at the Citiland Tower in Mandaluyong City.

But building manager Gil Baldemor denied the reports, saying that exhaustive investigation by Citiland engineers found no structural defects in the building.

Chato Perez, Citiland assistant vice president for public information, said her office would issue a statement today in connection with the findings of the Pasig City building officials and the subsequent issuance of notices to vacate the Citiland townhouses.

Matibag aide one of Cinco gunmen . . .

(From page A19)

Manila chief prosecutor Ramon Garcia charged Robles with murder and frustrated murder before the Manila Regional Trial Court.

Robles, 47, of Barangay Malakimpok, San Pascual, Batangas, is also facing charges of illegal possession of an unlicensed .32 Browning pistol (serial number 121440) before a Batangas court filed by the Department of Justice. He was arrested Thursday in a sugarcane plantation allegedly owned by the Matibag family.

A sister of Cinco's and a witness had identified Robles as one of the two gunmen in Cinco's killing.

Cinco's son Carlo and sister Marian Jayme were with Cinco on board her red Kia car when she was ambushed and killed on Nov. 20 at the corner of Pedro Gil and Eden streets in Sta. Ana, Manila. Jayme was unhurt in the ambush, but Carlos suffered a gunshot wound in the shoulder.

Cinco died from four gunshot wounds in the head and body.

The witness was standing at a Shell station near the scene of the ambush and saw the two gunmen.

In his one-page handwritten disposition, prosecutor Garcia said Jayme alleged that she recognized Robles as one of the two gunmen although a face towel partially covered his face and he was wearing sunglasses.

"On the other hand, the (other) witness alleged that the main suspect, before the shooting, (was standing) at the Shell station (near the crime scene," Garcia added.

NBI Director Wycoco said Jayme identified Robles through a scar on his forehead.

Jayme and Cinco's son Carlo yesterday joined Wycoco while he presented Robles to media.

Wycoco said Matibag's lawyers were already at the NBI "ten minutes after" Robles was arrested on Thursday.

"He was still in Batangas but they were already looking for him here," Wycoco said.

Robles was initially charged with illegal possession of firearms. But Matibag's brother, a certain Col. Ernesto Matibag, claimed that he gave Robles a mission order, authorizing him to carry the gun.

Wycoco said Colonel Matibag could get in trouble if it would be proved that Robles was not included in the police roster of civilian agents. He said an initial inquiry with the Philippine National Police showed that Robles was not a registered firearm holder.

Wycoco noted that the official who gave actor Robin Padilla a mission order years ago was dismissed from the service. Padilla was imprisoned for three years as a result of being arrested for illegal possession of firearms.

Wycoco said investigators also found another mission order from Colonel Matibag in Francisco's house, which police raided over the weekend. Francisco was not home during the raid, but police found his pictures, which they also presented to the media yesterday.

Cinco replaced Matibag as education and information department head upon the order of Comelec chair Alfredo Benipayo.

But Matibag, who was reassigned to the Comelec legal department, refused to report for work, prompting Benipayo to dismiss her.

When Matibag forcibly opened the conference room of the department, Cinco decided to issue a memorandum barring her presence in the department.

Matibag had petitioned her reassignment and asked the Supreme Court to void Benipayo's appointment and reinstate her as EID chief. The case is still pending with the high court.

Inmates' riot caused Muntinlupa prison fire

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

FORMER actress Maria Teresa Carlson was apparently "high" on drugs when she committed suicide. Carlson, 38, jumped from the 23rd floor of the Platinum Condominium in Greenhills, San Juan.

Her behavior before she jumped to her death indicated she was under the influence of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride). She was reportedly running away from somebody who, she said, was trying to kill her.

Most probably that somebody was non-existent.

***

Most shabu addicts become paranoid when they're high. They think that some people want to kill them.

I should know. I've had friends who were drug dependents. Some of them have kicked the habit while others are still on it.

When these friends of mine were high on shabu they would call me to ask for my help. Invariably, they would tell me that some people were out to kill them. Their fears were unfounded, of course. When they became lucid they forgot about coming to me for help.

***

Carlson probably became an addict because she was influenced by her husband, former Ilocos Norte congressman and governor Rodolfo Farinas.

Farinas was a drug dependent. He probably still is. That is public knowledge. During martial law, he and Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos partook of cocaine.

During drug–induced stupor, Farinas would beat up Carlson. He found reasons for beating her up, such as she was having an affair with another man.

When he was still governor about 10 years ago, Farinas detained Carlson and their children inside a vault because he suspected her of having trysts with one of his bodyguards.

***

For a bar topnotcher (No. 7 in 1977) and an Ateneo law graduate, Farinas is acting weirdly.

Before he married Carlson, Farinas had an affair with a famous movie actress, a sex siren.

He recorded on camera his sexual intercourse with that movie actress. That home video was seen by countless people.

If he's not a wacko why would he record his fornication with that actress and distribute it to his friends?

***

Why doesn't the Macapagal administration heed the call of Sen. Blas Ople to ask the US government to help in eliminating the Abu Sayyaf terrorists?

Perhaps the government could find a way to go around a constitutional provision that forbids the intervention of foreign troops in the country's internal problems.

The US would gladly extend a helping hand if asked to intervene in the pesky Abu Sayyaf problem. After all, two of its nationals are being held by the terrorist group. Another American in captivity had been beheaded by the terrorist group.

Aw shucks, forget our foolish pride! We need American help to fight the Abu Sayyaf because we have an inefficient Armed Forces.

***

The whole dormitory housing political prisoners inside the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa was razed last week.

Prison authorities say the fire was caused by faulty electrical wiring. That's a lie, according to a reliable source at the NBP.

The real cause of the fire was the explosion of molotov bombs thrown by inmates involved in a riot inside the national prisons compound. The rioters were members of the Bahala na Gang (BNG) and the Sigue-Sigue Sputnik which are at loggerheads.

***

The molotov bombs were made from kerosene being sold inside the NBP compound, the source said.

Inmates have access to an unlimited supply of kerosene which is provided by two tankers parked inside the prison compound.

P@#$%^& ! Why are those tankers allowed inside the prison compound?

Congress should investigate Corrections Director Ricardo Macala for allowing kerosene tankers inside the compound.

***

This corner has been exposing alleged irregularities committed by Corrections Director Macala. But nobody from the Department of Justice or Congress has taken action on the exposé.

One of Macala's alleged irregularities I exposed was allowing some inmates to go out to rob or kill people. The inmates come back to the NBP like homing pigeons. This corner even mentioned a name, an inmate named Jose Obosa who reportedly goes in and out of the NBP compound to rob or kill people. He comes back after the crime, according to my source at the NBP.

Another irregularity being committed by Macala is employing his son and son-in-law as collectors of "tong" from wealthy prisoners. His son and son-in-law are policemen. What are they doing at the National Bilibid Prison which is not part of the Philippine National Police?

***

Customs Commissioner Titus Villanueva doesn't deserve to stay any longer in his post because his subordinates don't respect him.

Villanueva has taken back his order transferring Customs Collector Billy Bibit from the Subic Freeport to the customshouse at the Clark Economic Zone. Bibit refused to obey the commissioner's order.

Because of Bibit's insubordination, other customs personnel no longer obeys Villanueva.

Umalis ka na diyan at hindi ka na iginagalang!

Collecting parking fees is illegal, says Manila councilor

By Jerome Aning

A MANILA councilor has again brought up the debate on whether shopping mall customers should pay for parking.

A proposed ordinance authored by Councilor Isko Moreno of the first district will bar persons and firms engaged in commercial activities such as malls, public or private markets, hotels, motels and restaurants, to collect parking fees from their customers.

"Since they are mandated by law to put up parking spaces, their customers should not pay for utilizing them," the actor-turned-politician said.

Moreno said commercial establishments covered by his bill would be required to post a message on conspicuous areas in their parking facilities indicating that the owner of the establishment shall be responsible for the loss or damage of the vehicles parked therein.

The councilor, who chairs the city council's science and technology committee, said that only owners of lots expressly intended as pay-parking areas—as stipulated in their building permit, certificate of occupancy, business permit and license to operate—have the right to collect parking fees.

Once approved, violators of the proposed measure will be fined P5,000 or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both, if the court decides so.

Moreno's proposal has been referred to the committees on transportation and on laws.

The collection of parking fees by mall owners was the subject of a spirited debate last year when lawmakers led by Sen. Renato Cayetano said it is illegal and violates the Consumer Act.

Two senate committees suggested that the Building Code be amended so that it would explicitly ban malls and other establishments from collecting such charges.

The Code requires establishments to provide parking spaces but does not clearly state whether or not such facilities should be provided to patrons free of charge.

The Office of the Solicitor General, representing the public, took the case to the Makati City regional trial court.

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2	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3	TIKIM
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A	TIKIM

Sunshine
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3	TIKIM
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3	RESERVE
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6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
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8 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC.
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2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Grand Central
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2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	TIKIM
4 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC.
5	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
6 (DOLBY)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
7 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
8	WEYT A MINIT
9	KAPITAN AMBO

Commonwealth
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2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	TIKIM
4	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
5 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC.
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7 (DOLBY)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
8	WEYT A MINIT

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

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2	TIKIM
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC

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Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7889

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MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
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Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

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3	RESERVE
4	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
5	TIKIM

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DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

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3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	MONSTERS, INC

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

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2	TIKIM

Berma
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1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM

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tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

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2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DTS)	MONSTERS, INC

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2 (DTS)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
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Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

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2 (DOLBY)	MONSTERS, INC
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	THE ONE
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DOLBY)	CAPT. CORRELLI'S
4 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER

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(Alabang) tel 850.1276

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(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

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4	KING OF GLADIATORS
5	DUGONG ASO

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2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	MONSTERS, INC

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

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2	HARRY POTTER
3	MONSTERS, INC

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

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2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	HAYOP SA SEX APPEAL

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

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2	MONSTERS, INC
3	HARRY POTTER

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

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2 (DTS)	DUGONG ASO

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 430.1657

1	DUGONG ASO
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	THE BODY
2	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

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3	SOON TO OPEN
4 (DTS ES)	MONSTERS, INC

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3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	MONSTER, INC.
7	HARRY POTTER
8	TIKIM
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	SERENDIPITY

ERMITA 536-7809 TO 12

1	MONSTER, INC.
2	HARRY POTTER
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4	TIKIM
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	HARRY POTTER
7	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

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2	HARRY POTTER
3	TIKIM
4	TIKIM
5	OTHERSIDE OF THE LAW
6	MONSTER, INC.
7	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
8	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

NOVALICHES 935-3229 TO 31

1	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	MONSTER, INC.
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	TIKIM
8	HARRY POTTER

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1	HARRY POTTER
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	TIKIM
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

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2	SERENDIPITY
3	THE ONE
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6	DUGONG ASO

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1	HARRY POTTER
2	SERENDIPITY
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	MONSTER, INC.

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	ANO BANG MERON KA?
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	KAPITAN AMBO
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	WEYT A MINIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	GLITTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	THE ONE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	EARTHQUAKE
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	UNFAITHFUL WIFE / SEX MEDUSA
ODEON	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
ODEON-2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
ROBEN	TIKIM
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
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QUEZON CITY	
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ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	TIKIM
REMAR	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
REMAR-2	TIKIM
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A	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
B	TIKIM
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
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CINEMA-3	WEYT A MINIT
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CINEMA-6	TIKIM
CINEMA-7	ANO BANG MERON KA?
CINEMA-8	KAPITAN AMBO
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HARRY POTTER
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CINEMA-15	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
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CINEMA-2	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-3	MONSTERS, INC.
CINEMA-4	MONSTERS, INC.
CINEMA-5	SERENDIPITY
CINEMA-6	HARRY POTTER
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

VELASQUEZ

Regine goes on tour

REGINE Velasquez takes her new album, "Reigne," on a nationwide tour of SM Malls.

Viva Records, a Viva Entertainment Company, and MTV Philippines present Regine's promo blitz.

Catch Regine in special performances on Dec. 9 at SM Bacoor, Dec. 13 at SM North Edsa, Dec. 19 at SM Pampanga, and Dec. 20 at SM Southmall in Las Piñas. All shows are at 5 p.m.

In January, Regine will continue the "Reigne" promo tour with shows on Jan. 10 at SM Iloilo, Jan. 11 at SM Cebu and Jan. 12 at SM Davao.

The "Reigne" tour is sponsored by MTV Philippines (where Regine is the current featured artist), Mossimo, SM Super-malls, Shangri-La Plaza, Disudrin Celeen and Odyssey.

"Reigne" is Regine's first studio album in almost two years. Her last was the multi-platinum "R2K." This was followed by the soundtrack of the blockbuster film "Kailangan Ko'y Ikaw," which starred Regine and Robin Padilla, the live recording, "Songbird Sings the Classics" and the soundtrack of another huge box-office hit, "Pangako Sa 'Yo," which starred Regine and Aga Muhlach.

"Reigne" is made up of 18 original compositions and includes works by Janno Gibbs, Viktoria and Trina Belamide and others.

The first single release is the lovely ballad "To Reach You" which was written by Lisa Diy and Chat Zamora.

Ariel, Gelli in 'Larawan'

VIEWERS are in for a Christmas treat for the whole month of December with the month-long Yuletide specials celebrating the family in GMA 7's "Larawan."

After the Yllana brothers in their very first team-up for a drama episode, "Larawan" now showcases celebrity couple Ariel Rivera and Gelli de Belen in the episode, "Gift of the Magi."

A 26-year-old widow, Kristine (Gelli de Belen), has Nicky, a three-year-old son to remember her husband Rey by. But before Rey met his death in a car accident, it had been his wish to be an organ donor. And he got his wish when the doctors pronounced him clinically dead after the accident.

"Larawan" airs Wednesday, 10 p.m. on GMA.

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Going for Oscar gold

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IT'S that time of year when the movie scene is revving up for the holidays, and some special productions are being brought in just in time for them to qualify for the 2001 Oscars. Here are some of the likelier prospects:

Will Smith in "Muhammad Ali." At first, people said it couldn't be done. The former rapper, TV sitcom star and action-comedy player simply didn't have it in him to "serious-up" his act and play **Cassius Clay**, Muhammad Ali, the self-styled King of the (boxing) world.

Smith was too light, too frisky for the complex, many-layered part, sniffed his detractors. But the film bio's producers decided to stick with Smith, and now his electric performance is eliciting some early Oscar buzz.

If "Ali" lives up to its promise, it could end up as one of the best movies about boxing ever made—right up there with "Raging Bull" and "Somebody Up There Likes Me."

To give the movie more of a fighting chance to achieve precisely that, Smith gave his all to his demanding role, which not only required him to box with the best of them, but also to plumb the depths of Ali's many-layered and sometimes contradictory character.

Whether or not he gets that Oscar gold, it's a fair bet that, after "Ali," Smith's acting career will no longer be the same. Producers won't continue to pigeonhole him in diverting and diversionary parts, and he could end up giving **Denzel Washington** a run for the best roles for blacks in Hollywood.

Meanwhile, **Jim Carrey**'s Oscar-worthy vehicle this year is "The Majestic," where he plays an amnesiac screenwriter. Like Smith, Carrey has been limited by his comic image. Despite some noteworthy exceptions to the rule like "The Truman Show," Carrey's most popular roles have practically forced him to perform rather than to portray.

Well, "The Majestic" presents a new and deeper Jim Carrey to viewers, so his portrayal in it could help him get over the resistance that Academy voters are perceived to have about giving the Oscar to a "mere comedian" like Carrey.

In his latest film, he plays a Hollywood writer who ends up on McCarthy's notorious blacklist of alleged communist sympathizers. Even more impressively, he also portrays a determined man who devotes his time to reopening an old moviehouse.

Finally, **Halle Berry** in the new film, "Monster's Ball," has her best crack ever at an Oscar nomination. The sexy star deglamorizes herself to play the widow of a convicted killer who falls for her husband's executioner.

Of such complex and even contradictory emotional impulses are award-winning performances made, so Berry is giving her attention-calling role everything she's got.

New 'Okatokat'

THE SECOND book of Channel 2's horror series, "Okatokat," premiers tonight at 9 p.m. Now that the characters played by **Ricky Davao** and **Agot Isidro** are married, they settle down and leave their supernatural cases behind them—or so they think.

They also acquire an "instant" ward in Agot's cousin, Kyle (**Emman Abeleda**). Unknown to them, he has inherited psychic powers from his mother (shades of young you-know-who). Can Kyle's sixth sense protect him from evil?

Other young regulars on the revitalized show are Kyle's new neighbors and friends—**Shaina Magdayao** as Twinkle; **Alwyn Uytingco** as Bobong, their group's self-proclaimed leader; **Joy Chong** as Britney, and **Jiro Manio** as Tofu.

The new "Okatokat" airs every Tuesday on Channel 2.

Jessica Rodriguez on nude Internet: Leave me alone

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

NO MATTER how hard **Jessica Rodriguez** tries to kiss her wild days goodbye, they just seem to hound her.

Her checkerboard love affairs would make good movie material. But Jessica does not pretend to be something she's not just to gain public approval. Many people misunderstand or simply don't understand her.

The latest "scandal" involving Jessica is the circulation of her nude photos in the Internet. Unlike most celebrities who would automatically make a denial, Jessica has no qualms about admitting that her cyber pics are authentic. What bothers her is who played the prank on her.

"Those shots were taken during my bridal shower party," she said. "It was a private affair and only my closest friends and talents were around. Instead of hiring macho dancers for the shower, *ako na lang ang pinagtripan ng* friends *ko*. They asked me to strip just for fun. *Tipong* end *na* of my fancy-free days."

Jessica is puzzled how the pictures were taken without her knowledge. "There were no pictures taken that night, but I guess someone was still able to take them, probably one of those I did not personally invite. Someone who just tagged along and had a hidden camera.

"The damage has been done," she said. "I'm just glad that **David** (**Bunevacz**, her husband) understands."

To lighten the mood, I told Jessica, "Never mind, if you have it, flaunt it."

She laughed and then turned pensive again. "It's just so frustrating that after all I've been through, they wouldn't leave me be. My life is an open book. I am trying to lead a quiet life with David. We're dying to have a baby and then this issue suddenly crops up.

"I wish they would give me a fair chance to be happy and be at peace."

Let's give her a break.

Guess list

- Guess who make up this celebrity couple. The guy keeps on denying he has a baby with another woman. The wife has been in denial for the longest time. I wonder what's stopping her from breaking free. Love may be blind but it ain't deaf. How long can she ignore the loudest whispers?
- Guess who this talent manager is who insisted that her ward be paid a talent fee even if the other stars agreed to be featured in the show gratis et amore. It's good exposure, after all. The talent desperately needs publicity these days. Maybe the manager should recommend her talent to host a game show like "The Price is Right."
- Guess who this actress is who finally woke up to reality when she saw the picture of her husband's girlfriend instead of pictures of her and their kids in his wallet. At first, she dismissed it as just a phase, until she checked his wallet.

Art and culture center

Makati City, host of the 3rd Cinemanila International Film Festival which starts on Dec. 6, is determined to make its mark as a center for culture and arts.

With Makati hosting Cinemanila, Mayor **Jejomar Binay** is confident that the city will become a must-visit destination for visitors looking for more than shopping and parties.

"We signed on for Cinemanila knowing that it has the potential to become one of Asia's major film festivals," said Binay. "Cinemanila hopefully would bring Makati to the attention of the local and international arts and culture communities. We hope to be able to use this opportunity to create a permanent interest in the city as a venue for other art forms."

For feedback, e-mail wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

TV special pays tribute to the silver screen

"CELEBR8: A Globe Get-Together," airs its fourth episode, "The Silver Screen," at 9 p.m. on Dec. 6 on Studio 23.

The grand musical pays tribute to the most memorable and well-loved movies.

With the Philippine Pop Orchestra conducted by musical director Gerard Salonga, "The Silver Screen" will feature selected pieces from famed Italian composer Ennio Morricone's scores from "Cinema Paradiso," "Malena" and "Love Affair," the Warren Beatty-Annette Bening remake of "An Affair to Remember."

Lead singer Kevin Roy takes a more classic number singing an Elton John classic "Your Song."

Vina Morales performs Nicole Kidman's "One Day I'll Fly Away" from "Moulin Rouge."

Franco Laurel, Cris Villonco, RJ Rosales and Agot Isidro croon a Julia Roberts medley from "Pretty Woman," "My Bestfriend's Wedding" and "Notting Hill."

Ogie Alcasid serenades viewers with cuts from his album, "Movie Moments," like Stephen Bishop's "It Might Be You" from the movie "Tootsie" and Kenny Rankin's "What Matters Most."

Songs by Barbra Streisand are also highlighted in the special. Isay Alvarez performs "The Way We Were" from the movie of the same title.

Agot Isidro sings "Tell Him" from "The Mirror Has Two Faces," while Anna Fegi belts out the undying "People."

National Artist Ernani Cuenco's famous *kundiman* masterpieces like "Bato sa Buhagin" and "Gaano Kita Kamahal" are interpreted by Isay Alvarez and Robert Seña.

The musical also features many of today's memorable love themes from animated cartoon movies: "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" from "The Lion King," "A Journey to the Past" from "Anastasia" and "When You Believe" from "Prince of Egypt."

Songs from "Peter Pan," "Camelot" and "Hunchback of Notre Dame" are performed by Carlo Orosa, Isay Alvarez, Diane dela Fuente, JM Rodriguez and Audie Gemora.

Be enchanted and have a chance to participate in the biggest text-based promo of the season with over 40 million in prizes at stake, with Globe's Text Away to Getaway promo.

ROBERT Seña and Isay Alvarez render memorable songs by Ernani Cuenco.

FEATURED performers in the Globe special: (from left) Franco Laurel, Cris Villonco, RJ Rosales and Agot Isidro.

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

HARRY POTTER - GP 1:50, 5:00, 8:10	HARRY POTTER - GP 12:40, 3:50, 7:00, 10:10	MONSTERS, INC. - GP 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50
MONSTERS, INC. - GP 12:30, 2:35, 4:40, 6:45, 8:50	SERENDIPITY - P 13 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:30	HARRY POTTER - GP 11:40, 2:50, 6:00, 9:10

Matinee, P80, Mon.-Fri., 11:00 am to 4:45 pm Screenings, Free Seating.

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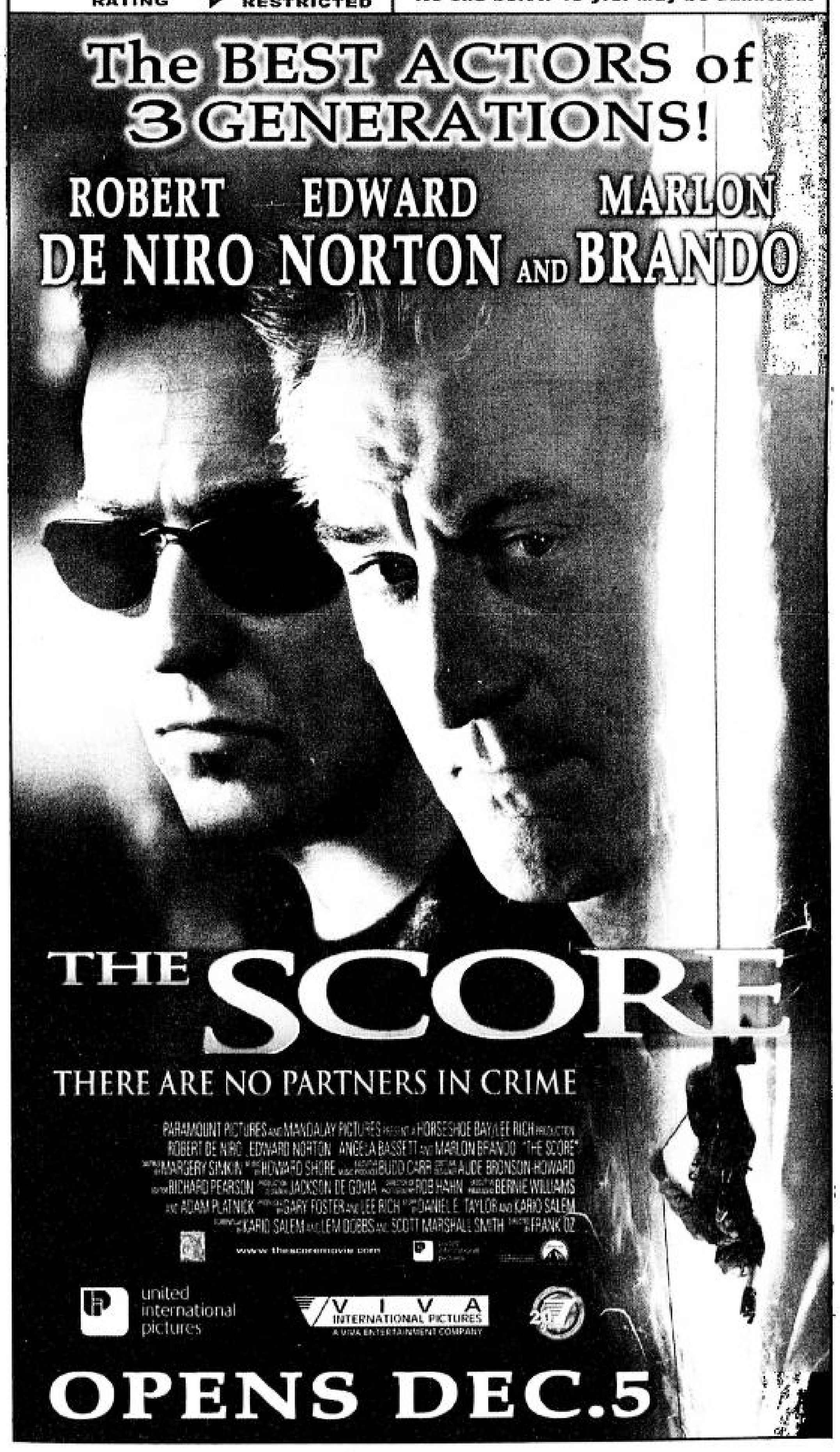

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2001

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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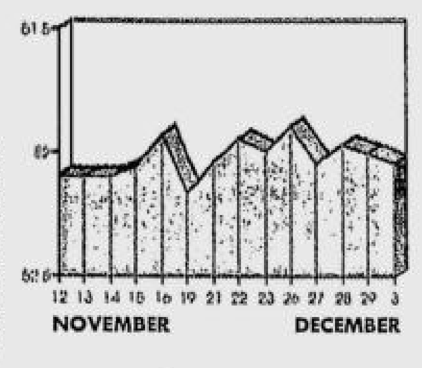
CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY ROBERT B. ANDRES

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱ 52.04 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Dec. 3, 2001

¥ 123.68 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Dec. 3, 2001

GOLD:$275.70/276.20
per ounce Hong Kong,
Dec. 3, 2001

STOCK MARKET

Shares down 2.1%

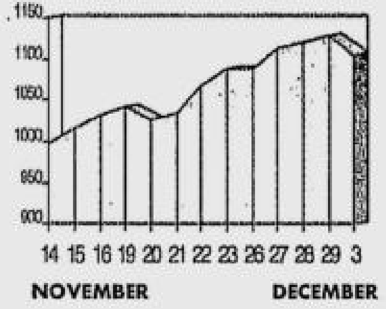
SHARES closed yesterday sharply lower as investors took profit, particularly on blue chip stocks, after three consecutive days of gains last week, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index lost 23.41 points, or 2.1 percent, at 1105.06 after closing Thursday 7.90 points higher to 1128.47 to complete a three-day run that boosted the main index by 3.7 percent.

Markets were closed Friday for a holiday.

AP

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B2)

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

YIELDS of treasury bills fell for the fourth straight week yesterday, bolstering expectations that the central bank would cut its policy rates and the reserve requirement on banks this week.

Exceeding the forecast of National Treasurer Sergio Edeza by a wide margin, the benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate slid by 0.311 percentage point to 8.987 percent, its lowest since July.

The rate of longer-dated treasuries went down by 0.441 percentage point to 10.012 percent for the six-month notes and by 0.281 point to 10.959 percent for the one-year instrument. Both were the lowest since June.

"I think it's possible that we could end the year with an average of 8.5 percent or even 8.25 percent for the benchmark 91-day T-bills specially if the central bank would make good its promise to cut rates and bank reserves this week," Edeza said.

As offers for the three tenors reached P11.315 billion, the government raised P3.5 billion yesterday and would offer through a tap facility another P3 billion worth of three-month, six-month, and one-year treasuries.

Edeza said the government would hold only two more auctions for the treasury bills and bonds and the scarce supply amid a strong cash position of banks had contributed to the significant decline in the borrowing rate yesterday.

He said the plan of the Bangko Sentral to cut its policy rates by at least another quarter of a percentage point to 8 percent as well as to reduce banks' reserve requirement by two percentage points to 18 percent could have been discounted by the market.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura earlier said that both plans would be seriously considered by the policy-making Monetary Board in its regular meeting this week.

"I think the treasury bill market is simply moving to the direction where it should really be headed had the market not been pre-occupied with fears that the government could not meet the budget deficit target and that it would have problems raising funds overseas," the central bank chief said.

Both concerns, Buenaventura added, have been addressed and the worries that the government would increase its domestic borrowing because of the two issues had been tempered.

Next year, Edeza said the Bureau of Treasury would bring back the size of the treasury bill and bond auction to P4 billion and P3 billion, respectively. The auction size for the debt notes were reduced as the government raised sufficient funds from foreign sources to finance a P145-billion budget gap this year.

"Given a favorable inflation outlook, I think falling interest rates is sustainable," Edeza said.

Buenaventura said the central bank was expecting inflation in November to decline to 4.5-4.7 percent from 5.3 percent the previous month.

In the last four auctions, the benchmark borrowing rate had slid by 0.925 percentage point. The longer-dated treasuries have shed 2.167 percentage points and 2.101 points.

Gov't, MRT firm near deal on extension project

BY ABIGAIL L. HO

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communications said it has arrived at an "acceptable document" with MRT-3 builder Metro Rail Transit Corp. for the MRT-3 extension deal.

MRT-3 general manager Mario Miranda said in a briefing yesterday that they "wrapped up negotiations" for the deal last Friday. "We worked through the holiday. We arrived at an acceptable document and we are now seeking clearance for it."

On the DOTC side, Miranda said they needed to get the nod of Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez. He said MRTC, on the other hand, was clearing the agreement up with the consortium's top management.

"If we get positive results, we will sign a contract and submit this to the Neda-ICC (National Economic and Development Authority-Investment Coordination Committee) for approval," he said.

Salient points of the revised agreement include a project cost of $204 million, a $10-million contingency budget plus a window for the purchase of light rail vehicles and the possibility of commercial development in the future, Miranda said.

"The rest is similar to the BLT (build-lease-transfer) agreement, but it was already converted to BT (build-transfer)," he said.

Should the Neda-ICC approve the agreement, Miranda said they have given the contractor 30 months to complete the 5.1-km project that would extend the existing MRT-3 from North Avenue to Monumento.

He added that the Neda-ICC should have an answer within the next 30 days because that was how long it usually took the agency to deliberate on projects.

"We'll try to get approval from the ICC soon. We've already provided them some initial information so I think it's not going to be hard for them (to arrive at a decision)," Miranda said.

ON A NORMAL DAY, IT GOES THROUGH 1 MILLION QUALITY TESTS.

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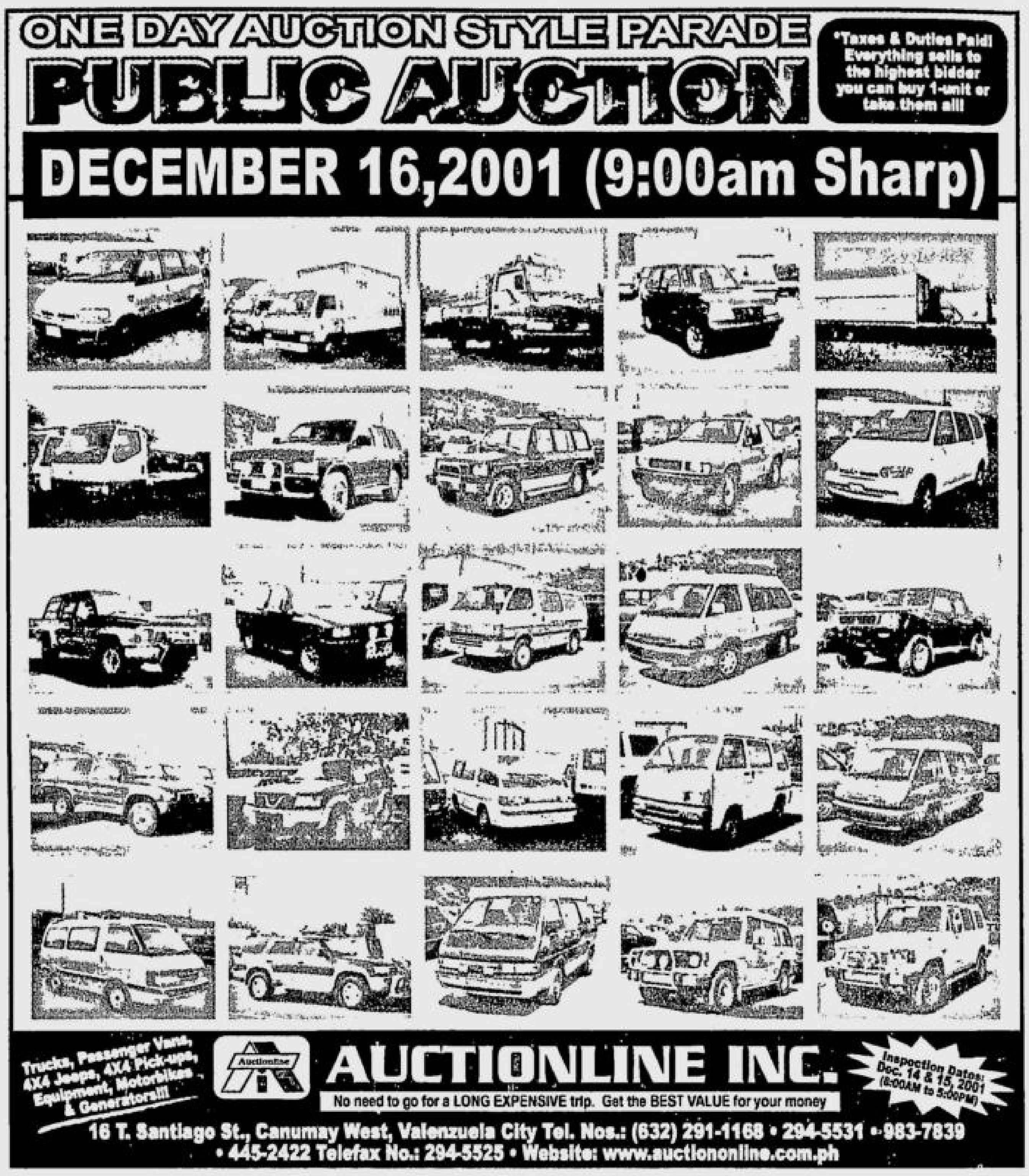
Ford Bacolod, Araneta St., Barangay Singcang, Bacolod City; Telefax No. (034) 434-2877
Ford Cebu, Magallanes cor. P. Burgos St., Cebu City 6000; Trunk Line: (032) 253-0453; Fax No. (032) 253 0429
Ford Davao, Km. 6, Lanang, Davao City; Tel. No. (082) 234-1111, Fax No. (082) 234-2222

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Monday, December 3, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	51.5	52.5	51.5	51.5	260,300
China Banking Corp.	510	510	510	510	40
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	24	24	22.25	22.75	323,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	176	177	174	175	23,190
Philippine National Bank	48.5	48.5	48	48	225,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	15	15	14.25	14.5	360,400
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1	1	0.96	0.96	200,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1390	1400	1390	1400	8,330
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1160	1180	1160	1180	8,570
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25	25	24.5	24.5	110,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.39	0.39	2,280,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	570	575	570	575	5,140
Ipeople Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	30,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	200,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.27	260,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	415	425	405	407.5	161,930
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.022	0.022	0.02	0.021	45,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	24	24	23.5	23.5	90,500

STOCKS/ B3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Nail policy

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

I BET you think Nestlé is only blackmailing this cute administration. The company has labor problems, so it tells the government it will cancel a plan to invest P3 billion here.

I bet you think Nestlé only wants this cute administration to solve its own problems. Dealing with labor, as everybody knows, is just part of doing business.

Sure, other companies deal with their labor problems. How come Nestlé wants the government on its side? Or else . . . I won't lend you my nail polish or something.

But I say you are wrong. Nestlé is a large foreign company, based far way in Switzerland, which has all the stolen wealth of our government officials for safekeeping.

* * *

I CANNOT believe such a company can do such a horrible thing. It can't blackmail the government of a country where, for many years already, it is making tons of money.

Normally, the guests don't blackmail the host—or, in this case, the hostess. Nestlé only wants to give this cute administration of Gloriaetta another thing to worry about.

Apparently, the Nestlé tactic is working. Trade Secretary Mar Roxas is already worried. He fears there will be a shortage of baby food in the whole of Asean.

I know what you are thinking. You are thinking, "What the hell has the labor problem of anybody in the Philippines got to do with baby food in Vietnam?"

* * *

Well, Nestlé makes baby food. In fact, it is the world's largest maker of infant formula milk, which is not best for babies. Breast milk is still best for babies, according to Nestlé.

Asean is going to be a free trade zone. Nestlé doesn't have to produce everything in each country. It assigns a certain product in each country to supply the whole region.

Assigned to the Philippines is that which is not best for babies, with an investment of P3 billion, or around $60 million, if the peso does not devalue as I write this.

Compared with Nestlé investments in other countries in the Asean region, that amount is just a molecule in a tiny droplet in the drip from the bucket of the whole tank.

* * *

FOR us, anyway, it's more than just the money. Should Nestlé drop its formula milk project here, our government worries that Asean babies will go hungry. It is confusing.

First, this cute administration thinks P3 billion is a big amount of investment. Well, considering that nobody is investing, even an investment of P1 million is big.

But it turns out that our government also wants to feel responsible for Asean babies. It wants Nestlé to feed them with something which is not best for them.

It all just implies that our government has to do something about Nestlé's labor problems. It implies… what, muzzling the labor union, strapping it, breaking it, what?

* * *

OR MAYBE our government will use the same, er, "solution" it gave to Japanese car companies. They simply won their labor cases, thank you so very much, you're welcome.

For among Japanese companies here, as their business chamber said in a recent paper, labor is their biggest headache. It is not so among the Americans. I wonder why.

The biggest worry of American companies here is peace and order, or law and order, if you will, which is followed by graft and corruption as far, far second.

Graft and corruption did not make it to the list of concerns of Japanese companies. Hmm. I don't know if it tells us something about the way they do business.

* * *

ANYWAY, during the visit of Gloriaetta to Tokyo, the top executive of Japanese car companies asked and got 15 minutes with her in private. Well, with some other people.

My info is, the main agenda of their meeting was—what else—labor problems. What do you know, they also planned to make huge investments in the Philippines.

So if you intend to invest huge amounts of money here, the government will help you solve your labor problems, is that it? It does not apply to everybody.

I just can't nail it. Is that the policy? Maybe we have no policy at all nowadays, and I think it's the main problem. We are getting more of politics rather than policy.

* * *

TODAY, our second biggest exports are garments. They go mostly to the United States. That country buys about 80 percent of all our garment exports.

Our garment sector is not doing well today because

BREAKTIME/ B3

Federal Chemicals, Inc.
Small Investors Program

A total of 10% of the Offer Shares or 1,250,800 shares shall be made available to Local Small Investors during an offer period from December 3, 2001 to December 7, 2001.

A local small investor is a share subscriber who is willing to subscribe to a minimum board lot or whose subscription does not exceed Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php20,000.00). Depending on market conditions, however, this 10% allocation for local small investors can be supplemented by subscriptions exceeding a minimum board lot of Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php20,000.00). In the event of an oversubscription for this 10% allocation or under any other circumstances, priority shall be given to the local small investors.

The offer to Local Small Investors shall take place as follows:

1. **Minimum Subscription.** Minimum of 1,000 shares.
2. **Subscription Forms.** An interested subscriber should cut out said Application Form/ Signature Card and photocopy the same to meet the four (4) copy requirement.

   Forms shall also be made available at selected RCBC Business Centers.
3. **Number of Forms.** Subscribers are not precluded from submitting more than one set of Application Forms for the purchase of additional board lots.
4. **Payment.** Forms should be filed at selected Business Centers on or before 12:30 noon of December 7, 2001. All applications should be supported by the following documents:
   - i. duly accomplished Application Form, in quadruplicate;
   - ii. duly accomplished Signature Card, in quadruplicate;
   - iii. photocopy of any of the following identification cards: SSS, GSIS, TIN, Passport; and
   - iv. manager's check in payment of the subscription.
5. **Rejection of Application.** The Business Centers shall have the authority to reject any Application Form filled up incorrectly or with incomplete supporting documents.
6. **Oversubscription.** In the event of oversubscription, priority shall be given to investors subscribing to the minimum board lot and any additional applications shall be disqualified. In the event of oversubscription where there are no multiple applications, the Lead Underwriter shall conduct a raffle to randomly determine the subscriptions to be accepted.

   If any application is rejected or accepted in part only, the application money or the appropriate portion of the same shall be returned without interest by way of a refund check made out in favor of the applicant and crossed "Payee's Account Only". The refund check shall be made available at the specific RCBC business center applied with until the end of the Offer Period and if not claimed within 30 days thereafter, the checks shall be mailed at the applicant's address as specified in his Application Form, at the applicant's risk.
7. **Stock Certificates.** As a matter of policy, the PSE requires the registration and lodging of a Company's securities for an IPO in the PCD. The PCD is a private institution which provides the depository and settlement system for securities, using the Book Entry System to record the ownership of shares. The BES allows the transfer of securities between accounts without the need for the issuance and transfer of stock certificates to the parties executing the trade or scripless trading.

   An Eligible Applicant shall have the choice of either: (i) lodging the shares with the PCD by electing a PCD participant (i.e., PSE member-brokers, custodian banks, institutional investors and other corporations or institutions that are active players in the Philippine equity market), provided that the Applicant is a *bonafide* client of the appointed PCD participant; or (ii) requesting for a stock certificate evidencing his ownership of such shares. The Eligible Applicant should indicate his choice in the Application to Subscribe.

   Should the Eligible Applicant fail to indicate his choice or provide incomplete or false information with regard to his choice as required hereinafter, this may lead to an automatic issuance of the stock certificate, subject to certain terms and conditions of the Offer, without prejudice to the Issue Managers' and Lead Underwriters' right to reject or scale-down such Application.

   The Offer Shares will be lodged with the PCD at least two (2) trading days prior to the Listing Date while the stock certificates will be issued and made available to Eligible Applicants who opted for certificates within three (3) trading days after the Listing Date.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

December 3, 2001	Start of Offer
December 7, 2001	End of Offer to Local Small Investors
December 7, 2001	Raffle for Local Small Investors
December 7, 2001	Results of the Raffle
December 21, 2001	Listing

LIST OF RECEIVING CENTERS

RCBC Capital Corporation, 7th Floor, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City

RIZAL COMMERCIAL BANKING CORPORATION (RCBC) BUSINESS CENTERS
METRO MANILA. Alabang, Binondo, Cubao, Kalookan, RCBC Plaza
LUZON: Baguio City, Naga City
VISMIN: Cebu City – Fuente Osmeña, Davao City

For more information, please contact RCBC Capital Corporation at Tel. No. 894-9000 ext. 2207/ 2212

FEDERAL CHEMICALS, INC.

ELEVEN RD. GRACE VILLAGE, BALINTAWAK, QUEZON CITY

APPLICATION TO SUBSCRIBE

Initial Public Offering of 12,508,000 New Common Shares
With Par Value of Php1.00 per share at Php7.00 per share

This application form together with the signature card, remittance of payment, and all application materials, must be received not later than December 7, 2001, 12:30 p.m., if filed with the Selling Agent, or not later than 10:00 a.m., December 10, 2001 (the "Offer Period Closing Date") if filed directly with an Underwriter for the Offer unless extended or terminated earlier with the approval of the Exchange at such time and date as of the Offer Shares are fully sold.

Applications received thereafter, or without the attachments specified below will be rejected. This application is irrevocable and, once received, may not be withdrawn by the applicant. The Company thru the Issue Manager reserves the right to accept or reject this Application. Applications improperly or incompletely accomplished may be rejected. In case of oversubscription, the Company thru the Issue Manager reserves the right to allocate the shares available to Applicants in a manner they deem appropriate.

APPLICATION

I/We apply to purchase Federal Chemicals, Inc. ("FCI" or the "Company") Shares under the terms and conditions stated herein and in the Prospectus for the Offer of such shares, as follows:

NUMBER OF SHARES	PRICE PER SHARE	TOTAL PURCHASE PRICE
	P7.00	

PAYMENT

The Offer Shares must be paid for in full upon submission of the Application. Payments should be made by check drawn against a Bangko Sentral Authorized bank in Metro Manila to the order of "Federal Chemicals, Inc. IPO". The check must be dated as of the date of the Application and crossed "PAYEE'S ACCOUNT ONLY".

TYPE OF CHECK | ○ Personal ○ Corporate ○ Manager's/Cashiers

BANK/BRANCH	CHECK NO.	AMOUNT

WARRANTY

I/WE REPRESENT AND WARRANT THAT ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN AND THE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT. I/WE WARRANT HAVING READ AND UNDERSTOOD AND RELIED SOLELY UPON THE PROVISIONS OF THE PROSPECTUS AND THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS STATED WITHIN THIS APPLICATION AND UNCONDITIONALLY ACCEPTED SAID TERMS AND CONDITIONS. I/WE UNDERSTAND THAT NO PERSON HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED TO GIVE INFORMATION OR TO MAKE ANY REPRESENTATION WITH RESPECT TO THE OFFER SHARES OTHER THAN THOSE SPECIFIED IN THE PROSPECTUS.

NAME OF APPLICANT IN PRINT	SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT	DATE
ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NO.	TAX IDENTIFICATION NO.
	NATIONALITY	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

(Applicants should not fill up this section)

To be completed by the Underwriting/Selling Agent
Application received with all the documents required below by:
(Name of Underwriter/Trading Participant)
By:
Date:

To be completed by the Receiving Bank
Application received by
Total No. of Shares
By
Date

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS TO THIS APPLICATION

1. Corresponding check payments
2. One fully executed signature card in the form attached to the Application
3. If the Applicant is a Corporation, Partnership, Trust Account, similar entity, the Application must be accompanied by the following documents
   - i. [illegible]
   - ii. [illegible]

FC

☐ Individual
☐ Corporate

Specimen Signature Card

Name ____________________
(Surname) (First Name) (Middle Name)

Mailing Address ____________________

T.I.N. | Tel. No. | Citizenship

Specimen Signatures for Individuals: *(Please sign twice)*

1.) ____________ 1.) ____________
2.) ____________ 2.) ____________

For Corporate Applicants: Use Reverse Side for Specimen Signature

Important: Certificates will not be transferred unless a specimen signature of the stockholder is on file with the transfer agent of the Company. For your protection, please fill out this card and return it with your Application.

Signature Verified by:
(Signature Over Printed Name)
Date ____________

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE OFFER

1. THE OFFER SHARES - The Company is offering for subscription to the public, a total of Twelve Million Five Hundred Eight Thousan (12,508,000) New Common Shares, each with a par value of One Peso (Php1.00) per share which are being made available for subscripti in the Philippines. The Offer Shares will represent approximately 33.35% of the issued and outstanding common shares of the Compa after completion of the Offer.
2. OFFER PRICE - The Offer Shares shall be offered at a price of Php7.00 per share.
3. OFFER PERIOD - The Offer Period for local small investors and Trading Participants shall commence at 9:00 a.m. of December 3, 2001 and shall expire at 12:30 p.m. of December 7, 2001. With respect to the Offering to the general public, the Offer Period shall start at 9:00 a.m. of December 3, 2001 and shall end at 10:00 a.m. of December 10, 2001. The Company and Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter reserves the right to extend or terminate the Offer Period at anytime, subject to the approval of the PSE.
4. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS - The Offer Shares may be purchased by any person who is at least eighteen (18) years old or a corporation, partnership or trust account subject to restrictions on the ownership, sale or transfer of the Offer Shares.
5. MINIMUM SUBSCRIPTION - Eligible Applicants shall have the right to subscribe to a minimum of one thousand (1,000) shares, and thereafter, in multiples of one thousand (1,000) shares. No Application of multiples of any other number of shares shall be considered.
6. PAYMENT TERMS - Eligible Applicants subscribing to the Offer Shares are required to pay the full amount of the Offer Shares applied for upon submission of their duly accomplished Application to Subscribe to the Underwriters or a designated Trading Participant. In case there are any Offer Shares that are not taken up by the Eligible Applicants, the Underwriters shall subscribe, or shall cause their clients to subscribe, to all unsold Offer Shares in accordance with their firm commitment to underwrite the same and shall remit the full payment of their subscription and/or that of their clients to the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter not later than 10:00 a.m. of December 11, 2001 or on such date as may be agreed upon in writing by the Issuer and the Issue Managers and Lead Underwriters.

   Payments for the subscription and purchase of the Offer Shares shall be made by check drawn against a BSP authorized agent bank in Metro Manila and made payable to the order of "Federal Chemicals, Inc. IPO" crossed "Payee's Account Only".
7. APPLICATION TO SUBSCRIBE - Eligible Applicants may subscribe to and purchase the Offer Shares by submitting a duly completed Application to Subscribe (defined to include one (1) fully executed signature card, accompanying payment and other documentary requirements as may be indicated below, if applicable), which must be received by the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter on or before 10:00 a.m. of December 10, 2001 or on such later date as may be agreed upon in writing by the Issuer and the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter. In case any Offer Shares are not taken up by the Eligible Applicants, the Underwriters and/or their clients shall submit their respective duly completed Application to Subscribe to the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter not later than 10:00 a.m. of December 11, 2001 or on such later date as may be agreed upon in writing by the Issuer and the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter.
8. SMALL INVESTOR PROGRAM - In compliance with SEC-BED Circular No. 4, Series of 1997, ten percent (10%) of the entire IPO shall be offered to "local small investors". A local small investor is a share subscriber who is willing to subscribe to a minimum board lot or whose subscription does not exceed Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php20,000.00). Depending on market conditions, however, this 10% allocation for local small investors can be supplemented by subscriptions exceeding a minimum board lot of Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php20,000.00). In the event of an oversubscription for this 10% allocation or under any other circumstances, priority shall be given to the local small investors.
9. REQUIREMENTS FOR CORPORATE APPLICANTS - Applicants who are corporations whether foreign or local, partnerships or trusts eligible to subscribe to and purchase the Offer Shares are required to submit the following documents, in quadruplicate, together with the Application to Subscribe and duly executed signature card: (i) Copy of the Applicant's SEC Certificate of Registration, Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, or other constitutive documents as amended (if applicable) and (ii) Certificate of the Corporate Secretary of the Applicant attesting to the Resolution of the Applicant's Board of Directors which: (1) authorizes the subscription and/or purchase of the Offer Shares applied for and specifying the signatories for the purpose, and (2) includes specimen signatures of the designated authorized signatures.
10. REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-RESIDENT INDIVIDUAL OR FOREIGN CORPORATE AND INSTITUTIONAL APPLICANTS - In addition to the documents required for either Individual or Corporate Applicants above, non-resident individuals or foreign corporate and institutional Applicants are required to submit in quadruplicate, together with their Application to Purchase, a representation and warranty stating that their investing in the Offer Shares being applied for will not violate the rules of their jurisdiction and that they are allowed to acquire or invest in the Offer Shares.
11. RIGHT TO ACCEPT/REJECT/SCALE DOWN APPLICATIONS - As authorized by the Issuer, the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter reserve the right to jointly reject, scale down or reallocate any Application for the Offer Shares. Applications to Subscribe in respect of which checks are dishonored upon presentment or Applications to Subscribe which do not comply with the terms of the Offer, and which are deficient in any material information required therein, shall be rejected. In the event of an oversubscription of the Offer Shares, the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter, as authorized by the Issuer shall likewise have the right to scale down any Offer Shares applied for. An Application to Subscribe, once accepted, shall constitute the Subscription Agreement between the Applicant and the Issuer for the Offer Shares. In case of reduction or rejection, the Underwriter shall inform the Applicant in writing of such reduction or rejection within ten (10) Banking Days after the end of the Offer Period.
12. REFUNDS - Refunds, in whole or in part, of payments for any Application not accepted or scaled down shall made without interest. Each refund check shall be made available for pick-up at the Head Office of the Issuer or the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter within ten (10) Banking Days after the close of the Offer. Refund checks which remain unclaimed after thirty (30) Banking Days from Issue Date shall then be mailed at the risk of the Applicant to the address specified by the Applicant in its/his Application to Subscribe.
13. DELIVERY OF STOCK CERTIFICATES - As a matter of policy, the PSE requires the registration and lodging of a company's securities for an IPO in the PCD. The PCD is a private institution which provides the depository and settlement system for securities, using the Book Entry System to record the ownership of shares. The BES allows the transfer of securities between accounts without the need for the issuance and transfer of stock certificates to the parties executing the trade or scripless trading.

    An Eligible Applicant shall have the choice of either: (i) lodging the shares with the PCD by electing a PCD participant (i.e. PSE Trading participants, custodian banks, institutional investors and other corporations or institutions that are active players in the Philippine equity market), provided that the Applicant is a bonafide client of the appointed PCD participant; or (ii) requesting for a stock certificate evidencing his ownership of such shares. The Eligible Applicant should indicate his choice in the Application to Subscribe.

    Should the Eligible Applicant fail to indicate his choice or provide incomplete or false information with regard to his choice as required hereinafter, this may lead to an automatic issuance of the stock certificate, subject to certain terms and conditions of the Offer, without prejudice to the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter's right to reject or scale-down such Application.

    The Offer Shares will be lodged with the PCD at least two (2) trading days prior to the Listing Date while the stock certificates will be issued and made available to Eligible Applicants who opted for certificates within three (3) trading days after the Listing Date.
14. TAXES - All documentary stamp taxes applicable to the original issuance of the Offer Shares and all taxes relating to the Offer shall be for the account of the Issuer.
15. REGISTRATION OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT - The Issuer does not undertake to register any foreign investment with respect to the Offer Shares with the BSP. It shall be the obligation of the foreign investor to secure the necessary clearances and/or approvals from the BSP regarding repatriation of the investments in the Offer Shares and remittance of dividends.
16. LISTING - An application for listing of the Offer Shares on the Second Board has been filed with the PSE. Acceptance of all Applications to Subscribe the Offer Shares is conditional upon the listing of the Offer Shares with the PSE. It is expected that the Offer Shares shall be listed with the PSE on December 21, 2001 and trading of the Offer Shares is expected to commence on the same date. In the event that the Common Shares are not listed with the Exchange for any reason, the Company shall return the payments made by the Applicants for the Offer Shares under their respective Applications to Subscribe without interest.
17. STOCK TRANSFER AGENT - RCBC Trust and Investment Division shall act as the Stock Transfer Agent for the purpose of authenticating and registering transfer of the Offer Shares as set forth in the Stock Transfer Agreement.
18. RESTRICTION ON ISSUANCE AND DISPOSAL OF SHARES - In compliance with the PSE Listing Rules applicable to companies applying to list on the Second Board, all existing shareholders at the time of filing of the application for listing shall enter into an agreement with the Exchange not to sell, assign, or in any manner, dispose of all their shares after the close of its initial public offering and for the duration of two (2) years following the listing of said shares. In addition, the Company shall not issue additional shares within one hundred eighty (180) days from Listing Date.

THE APPLICANT IS ADVISED TO READ THE OFFERING PROSPECTUS FOR A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE SHARES AND THE TERMS UNDER WHICH THEY ARE OFFERED.

Dear Applicant,

Please indicate if you want to receive stock certificate(s) for your subscription to shares of stock of Federal Chemicals, Inc. (FCI) by signing on the space provided for below.

Stock certificate(s) will be delivered to the Selling Agent and/or Underwriter to whom you submitted your application to subscribe within three (3) days after Listing Date of the FCI shares in the Philippine Stock Exchange. Stock certificate(s) unclaimed after sixty (60) days will be mailed, at the Applicant's risk, to the address indicated in the Application To Subscribe.

Thank you.

FEDERAL CHEMICALS, INC.

This will confirm that the undersigned Applicant wishes to receive stock certificate(s) for his subscription to shares of stock of Federal Chemicals, Inc. This will authorized Federal Chemicals, Inc. and/or the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter, RCBC Capital Corporation, and/or the transfer agent, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) – Trust and Investment Division, to take any and all steps to cause the issuance of the stock certificate(s) in my name. This will also serve as a request to the Philippine Central Depository, Inc. (PCDI) to cause the upliftment of shares of Federal Chemicals, Inc. registered in the name of the undersigned for eventual issuance of stock certificate(s)

Thank you.

Name and Signature of Applicant

Date:

Stocks . . . (From page B2)

Manila Electric Co. B	32	32	30.5	31	1,629,100
Petron Corp.	1.46	1.48	1.42	1.44	8,038,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	10,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1	1	1	1	20,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.66	1.66	1.58	1.62	1,680,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	450,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	60,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.99	1	0.99	0.99	160,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	15,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	51,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.25	353,100
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	24	24	23.75	24	12,000
RFM Corp.	2.14	2.18	2.14	2.16	1,473,000
San Miguel Corp. A	41	41.5	41	41.5	307,900
San Miguel Corp. B	51	51.5	51	51.5	229,000
Universal Robina Corp.	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	50,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	10,000
Ayala Corp.	5.1	5.1	4.9	4.95	2,604,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	10,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.77	0.78	0.75	0.78	2,220,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.006	15,000,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.7	10	9.7	10	13,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.78	0.8	0.74	0.75	8,270,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.12	1,700,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.065	0.075	0.065	0.065	1,000,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.21	0.22	0.2	0.205	4,570,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.085	0.1	0.085	0.095	800,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.91	0.91	280,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	27	27	25.5	25.5	468,100
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.15	600,000
Ionics Inc.	7	7.4	6.6	6.6	211,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.52	1.52	312,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	3,720,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.4	0.42	0.36	0.37	14,380,000
Music Corp.	0.51	0.55	0.46	0.47	37,360,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.38	0.39	2,150,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.17	0.14	0.15	5,490,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	640,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	80,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	80,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.4	0.45	0.4	0.42	510,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	50,000
Manila Jockey Club	9	9	9	9	32,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	25.5	25.5	24.25	24.25	1,444,800
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.82	1.82	1.7	1.7	300,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	560	560	560	560	350
Jollibee Warrants	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	13,900
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0016	0.0016	0.0014	0.0014	155,000,000
RFM Corp.-Pref.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	60,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.0065	0.0065	0.0055	0.006	181,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	9,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.85	993,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	100,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.195	0.195	2,810,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.3	0.34	2,000,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.22	0.245	0.22	0.235	1,580,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.56	1.62	5,381,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.18	0.2	0.18	0.2	1,040,000
SM Development Corp.	1	1	1	1	20,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.3	6	6	6,528,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	400,000
MINING					
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.022	7,700,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	200,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	500,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	10,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	12,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0032	0.0032	35,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.017	0.017	10,800,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	100,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	350,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.017	0.017	0.016	0.016	9,500,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	80,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0038	0.0038	0.0036	0.0036	36,000,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	6,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	100,000

Gov't moves to end Nestlé row

By Raul C. Dancel

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment has assumed jurisdiction over a labor dispute threatening to cripple the operations of Nestlé Philippines Inc.

In an order issued last week, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas prevented two of Nestlé's nine unions from putting up picket lines at the company's factories in Cabuyao, Laguna, and Lipa, Batangas.

The labor secretary also restrained the company from retrenching workers or declaring a lockout.

Reacting to the labor department's move, Nestlé chair and chief executive Juan Santos said he was "thankful for this timely intervention preventing work stoppages in our two major installations."

"As a result of this action, both parties are prevented from taking any action that will get in the way of a fruitful conclusion, such as the company declaring a lockout or the union going on strike or other concerted actions, such as noise barrages and slowdowns," said Santos.

Nestlé's unions in Cabuyao and Lipa were set to go on strike following a deadlock in negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement between them and the company.

In a statement, Nestlé announced that it had signed CBAs with six of its nine unions.

These agreements provided, among other wage and non-wage benefits, a P75,000 financial assistance, an industrial peace incentive of up to P25,000, and an increase of P1,250 a month on the second and third years of the CBAs' three-year life-span.

Reacting to reports that Nestlé's labor problems were jeopardizing its P3-billion expansion plan, Santos said he would "continue to try and convince Nestlé's investors, provided the new contracts do not jeopardize existing agreements."

Breaktime

(From page B2)

exports are down. The US economy is not doing well. Americans apparently go naked when times are bad.

A friend of mine, anyway, who has factories in Cavite, suffered a cancellation of one entire order for the Christmas season. That bad!

Our garment-sawing industry is dependent on the US market. That's why this cute administration is trying to work something out with the US government. Favor, please!

* * *

IT'S called "full flexibility," which has nothing to do with the elastic in your underwear or even the ability of body contortionists in the circus.

Full flexibility refers to the quota imposed by the United States on our shipment of garments there. The US government limits us to a certain volume for pants, for instance.

The problem is, sometimes, our garment makers get more orders for pants than, say, T-shirts. Thus, they use up all the quota. They cannot serve the orders.

So this cute administration is asking the US government for "full flexibility." Can we use the quota for children's wear for athletic supporter, instead? Something like that?

* * *

WITHIN the DTI itself, however, the higher-ups know very well that we are just taking a swing at the moon (you know, *suntok sa buwan*). It is only wistful thinking.

In the United States, among the strongest lobby groups happens to be the textile and garment sector. The garment quota is always a political issue. It's more of politics than policy.

The way I look at it, our garment makers just have to fight it out in the US market. No quarters asked, none given. They cannot survive on just asking for favors.

Well, unlike Nestlé, they just sell to the United States. They don't invest huge amounts in the US. They have to solve their own problems.

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED directors of **Belle Corp.** were Ramon Ang, Rogelio Cabunag, Fulgencio Factoran, Ma. Louisa Gonzales, Benito Tan Guat, Antonio Henson, Michael Albert Kahayon, Luis Lorenzo Jr., Jacinto Ng Jr., Willy Ocier, Hans Sy, Washington Sycip, A. Bayani Tan, Edmundo Tan and Cesar Virata.

* * *

ALSONS Consolidated Resources Inc. has denied having any information that may explain the 50-percent increase in its share price that rose from 6 to 9 centavos.

***

ALSONS Cement Corp. will increase its authorized capital stock from P2 billion to P5.315 billion.

* * *

SM Development Corp. has bought 650,000 of its shares for a total purchase price of P632,000.

* * *

FIL-Hispano Holdings Corp. has agreed to sell its 13,592-square-meter Valenzuela City property to **Puregold Price Club Inc.** for P111.45 million.

* * *

EAST Asia Power Resources Corp. has announced the resignation of Jose Feria Jr. as director. Jose Ramon Revilla was elected to replace him while Kong Choong Lam was elected as treasurer and chief financial officer to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Howard Edens last August.

* * *

BANKARD Inc. has announced the resignation of Annette Manapil as treasurer. Appointed acting treasurer was Felix Sinconegue. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

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Partial List 12/03/2001	ASKED Price	Playing Rights: Please Call	BID Price
ALABANG "A"	1,500,000	ALABANG "A"	Call now
BAGUIO CC	740,000	BAGUIO CC	700,000
CELEBRITY CLUB	200,000	MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	Call now
MANILA POLO	2,800,000	MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	750,000
ORCHARD "A"	250,000	MANILA GOLF (INDIV.)	11,000,000
STA. ELENA "A"	1,700,000	MANILA POLO	2,500,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	750,000	STA. ELENA "B"	Call now
WACK WACK GOLF	Call now	WACK WACK GOLF	Call now

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DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOME

COUNTRY SHARES
As of December 04, 2001

	BUYING	SELLING
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB A/B*	1,350,000	1.4M/1.5M *
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	680,000	730,000
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB A/B*	-	100,000/105,000 *
CAMP JOHN HAY	-	300,000
CANLUBANG	-	750,000
CAPITOL HILLS	-	130,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	-	200,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	350,000/620,000 **	375,000/450,000*/700,000 **
EVERCREST A/B*	-	100,000/150,000 *
FONTANA D/C*/B**	-	90,000/150,000*/230,000 **
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	180,000	230,000/350,000*/450,000 **
LUISITA GOLF CLUB	-	Please call or swap
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	250,000	300,000/400,000 *
MANILA GOLF CLUB CORP.	-	14M
MANILA POLO CLUB	2,500,000	2,800,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	-	700,000/750,000 *
METROPOLITAN A/B*	-	135,000/150,000 *
MIMOSA IND./CORP*	-	240,000/375,000 *
MT. MALARAYAT A/C**/B*	350,000/500,000 **	400,000*/625,000 **
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	200,000/400,000 **	230,000/425,000 **
PUERTO AZUL A/B*	140,000	150,000/Please call *
RIVIERA A/B*	-	200,000/400,000 *
ROCKWELL CLUB	-	500,000
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B*/C**	-	110,000/150,000*/180,000 **
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B*/C**	-	230,000/350,000*/450,000 **
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB A	-	1,650,000
SUBIC BAY IND/CORP.*	-	300,000/450,000 *
TAT FILIPINAS GOLF A/B*	-	350,000/550,000 *
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS CC/GOLF*	370,000 *	375,000/750,000 *
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	650,000	700,000
VALLE VERDE IND.	170,000	185,000
WACK WACK	6,000,000	6,700,000

Available Lessors for Playing Rights: Alabang, Calatagan, Camp John Hay, Canlubang, Canyon Woods, Celebrity, Eagleridge, Eastridge, Forest Hills, Makati Sports, Malarayat, Orchard, Riviera, Sta. Elena, Southwoods, Tagaytay H-lands & Midlands, Valley Golf, Wack Wack, Rockwell & Others
Need Lessor: Manila Golf Below P300,000 & Tat Filipinas Golf
Selling: Villas, Belleview, Pinecrest & Woodlands in Tagaytay Highlands
Lots: Eagleridge, Forest Hills, Punta Fuego, Royale Tagaytay & Southwoods
Buying: Orchard Lot Phase 7
Please Call Tel. Nos. 853-1626 or 853-1627; Globe 0917-6988275 or 0917-6140856

G & W clubshares
SEC License Broker No.: A-17597
As of December 4, 2001

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A"	-	1,350,000
Alabang Country Club "B"	1,500,000	-
Baguio Country Club	730,000	-
Camp John Hay	250,000	-
Capitol Hills Golf & CC	130,000	-
Calatagan Golf	90,000	-
Canyon Woods	280,000	180,000
Canlubang	650,000	-
Celebrity Sports	195,000	-
Eagleridge "A"	Pls. Call	330,000
Eastridge	220,000	-
Fontana "D/C"	90,000/140,000	Pls. Call
Forest Hills "A"	Pls. Call	200,000
Manila Polo	-	2,500,000
Manila Golf	-	11,000,000
Makati Sports Club	350,000	-
Manila Southwoods "A"	700,000	600,000
Mt. Malarayat	-	350,000
Orchard	230,000	190,000
Orchard "B"	-	250,000
Phil. Columbian	90,000	60,000
Puerto Azul	170,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	240,000	210,000
Riviera Golf	195,000	-
Rockwell	450,000	-
Royale Tagaytay	100,000	Pls. Call
Sherwoods	120,000	-
Subic Bay Yatch Club "Corp"	400,000	Pls. Call
Tagaytay Country Club	380,000	340,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf & CC	-	700,000
Tagaytay Midlands	750,000	600,000
Valle Verde (Indv.)	175,000	160,000
Valley Golf	250,000	-
Wack-Wack Golf	-	5,800,000

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GOLFERS
CLUB SHARES, INC.
SEC LICENSE # A 1998-2129
AS OF DECEMBER 3, 2001

	SELLING	BUYING
*1. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,500,000	1,400,000
*2. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,600,000	
3. BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	725,000	700,000
4. CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	100,000	80,000
5. CAMP JOHN HAY	300,000	
6. CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	700,000	
7. CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	125,000	115,000
8. CELEBRITY CLUB	210,000	190,000
9. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	380,000	350,000
10. CLUB FILIPINO	250,000	200,000
11. EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	220,000	
12. EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	375,000	340,000
13. EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	100,000	
14. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	230,000	210,000
15. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	280,000	
16. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	500,000	
17. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"		280,000
18. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	400,000	
*19. MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	15,000,000	12,000.00
*20. MANILA POLO CLUB	3,000,000	2,700,000
21. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	700,000	650,000
22. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	750,000	700,000
23. METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	140,000	
24. METROPOLITAN CLUB "B"	150,000	
25. MT. MALARAYAT GOLF CLUB (IND.)	400,000	330,000
26. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	220,000	200,000
27. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	300,000	
28. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	550,000	350,000
29. QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	230,000	200,000
30. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	220,000	190,000
31. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	350,000	
*32. STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	1,800,000	1,600,000
33. SUBIC BAY YACHT CLUB (IND)	300,000	
34. TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L GOLF CLUB	800,000	750,000
35. TAGAYTAY MIDLAND	750,000	600,000
36. VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	180,000	
37. VALLEY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	240,000	
*38. WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	6,800,000	

ASSIGNMENT OF PLAYING RIGHTS PLS. CALL
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PAUL CORTEZ PRESIDENT
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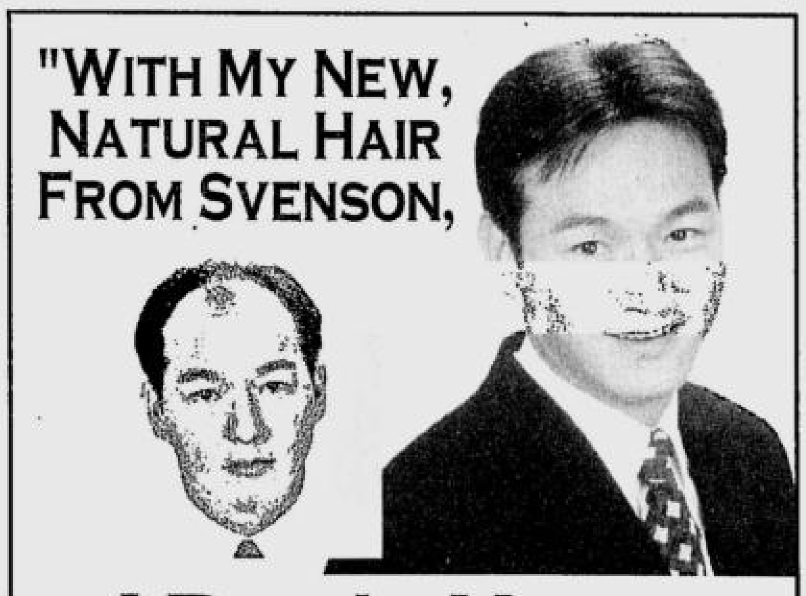

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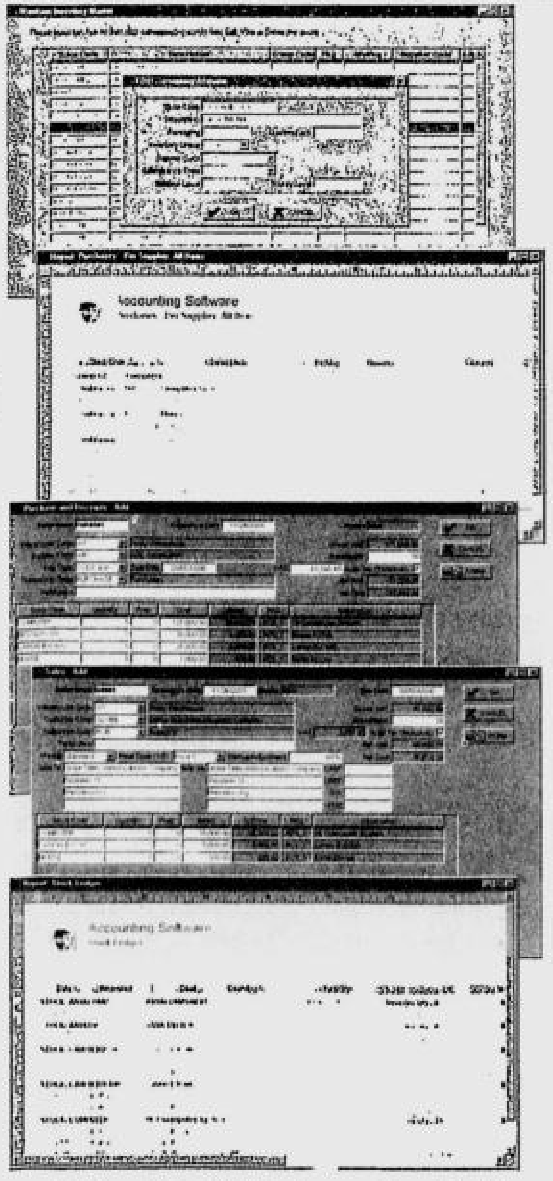

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Enron Corp. seeks bankruptcy protection

HOUSTON, Texas—US energy giant Enron announced Sunday it had filed for bankruptcy protection and was bringing a lawsuit against its former merger partner, Dynegy, which walked away from the deal last week.

In a statement released here, Enron said the company and its subsidiaries had filed voluntary petitions seeking reorganization under Chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy Code with the US Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York.

The energy company—which last year posted nearly $100 billion in revenue—also formally accused Dynegy of breach of contract in connection with the firm's termination of its proposed merger with Enron and said it was seeking damages of at least $10 billion.

Enron is asking the court to consider a number of motions to support its employees, vendors, trading counterparties, customers and other constituents.

The company said it was in "active discussions" with various leading financial institutions for debtor-in-possession financing and expected to complete these discussions shortly.

"While uncertainty during the past few weeks has severely impacted the market's confidence in Enron and its trading operations, we are taking the steps announced today to help preserve capital, stabilize our businesses, restore the confidence of our trading counterparties, and enhance our ability to pay our creditors," Enron chair Kenneth Lay said.

Enron hit rock bottom last week as plans for a life-saving merger with Dynegy were scuppered and the company's debt was cut to junk bond status.

The Houston-based energy giant saw its already battered shares collapse in a matter of hours as investors bet the company would be unable to escape from the scandal of risky investments that have recently come to light.

On Wednesday, Enron shares slipped to 61 cents, down 85 percent for the day and 98 percent from a year ago.

The shares ended the week at 26 cents—a tiny fraction of its nearly $85-per-share high earlier this year when it was the biggest US energy broker.

Dynegy, which just two weeks ago agreed to a life-saving merger for Enron, walked away from the deal Wednesday, saying the full extent of Enron's financial woes had not been disclosed.

Standard and Poor's and Moody's cut Enron's credit rating to junk bond status just before the announcement, warning that the deal was unlikely to be completed.

Without bankruptcy protection, Enron could have been forced to quickly repay some $7 billion in debts that had been off its books up to now as well as $3.9 billion linked to troubled partners, according the Fitch rating agency.

It also has another $13 billion in other debts.

As part of the now defunct merger deal, Dynegy's 26-percent owner ChevronTexaco had already provided Enron with $1.5 billion in upfront cash. In exchange, Dynegy got rights to acquire the desirable Northern Natural Gas Co. pipeline in the event of a collapse of the merger.

But in papers filed with the bankruptcy court, Enron said Dynegy had "no right to exercise its option to acquire the entity that indirectly owns the Northern Natural Gas pipeline because that option can only be triggered by a valid termination of the merger agreement." *AFP*

Micron in talks with Hynix

SEOUL—US microchip giant Micron Technology Inc. is in talks with South Korea's ailing Hynix Semiconductor Inc. on a possible alliance and other transactions, Hynix officials said Monday.

Discussions will be "exploratory in nature," the two companies said in a statement issued by Micron CEO and chairman Steve Appleton and Hynix President Park Chong-Sup.

Appleton and Park said: "Both companies are evaluating a broad array of strategic options."

They did not say whether their talks will lead to the merger, which could change the picture of the world's microchip industry troubled by oversupply and falling prices.

"This effort represents a part of Hynix's ongoing evaluation of possible steps to maximize stakeholder value in the face of an unprecedented downturn in the semiconductor industry," Park said.

South Korean newspapers said last week that Appleton made a secret trip to Seoul for talks with Hynix about a merger, asset acquisitions or the sale of Hynix shares.

The world's third largest memory chip producer, which is reeling under heavy debts, regards a merger as the last option for its survival.

Hynix has sought to sell some assets and technology to Chinese and other foreign companies since creditors approved a $2.9-billion bailout last month. *AFP*

Net users losing fast connections

SAN FRANCISCO—Some 850,000 US Internet users lost high-speed Internet connections, including access to email and personal websites, this weekend after negotiations failed between bankrupt ExciteAtHome and telecom giant AT&T Corp.

"After determining that it would not be able to reach agreement with AT&T, the company terminated service to AT&T," said a statement from Excite, which provided high-speed Internet connections through cable television modems.

The breakdown came after a bankruptcy court ruling Friday that Excite, which filed for bankruptcy two months ago, could dump contracts with cable television companies costing the company $6 million a week.

AT&T, which owns about 72 percent of the voting stock in Excite, tried to buy the company for $307 million, but Excite's creditors said the price was too small for North America's largest high-speed Internet service provider.

Excite provides service to some 4.1 million users in North America, including about 850,000 AT&T customers.

AT&T warned in a statement Saturday that the blackout "is expected to negatively impact growth in the company's number of Broadband Internet customers and revenue generating unit." *AFP*

ENRON Corp. headquarters, right, and a partially completed second tower, left, are seen from a window in Dynegy Inc.'s headquarters just down the street in Houston, Texas. Enron filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Sunday and a $10-billion lawsuit against Dynegy Inc. for scrapping a proposed buyout. AP

China seen posting 7.4% growth

BEIJING—China's top economic planner has predicted the country's economic growth will slow to 7.4 percent this year, state media reported Monday.

The growth has been based mainly on government efforts to fuel domestic demand amid the challenges posed by the slowing world economy, the Xinhua news agency said, citing Zeng Peiyan, head of the State Development Planning Commission.

The growth rate compares with 8 percent posted in 2000 amid more favorable global economic conditions, but is up slightly from a 7.3-percent forecast made recently by the National Bureau of Statistics.

Zeng also predicted consumer prices would rise about one percent in 2001, compared with a 0.4-percent rise last year, according to the news agency.

The planner also expected income disparities to have widened further this year, as incomes were likely to have risen faster in the cities than in the countryside.

Average disposable incomes in urban areas probably have risen 7 percent this year, whereas rural disposable incomes are up by an average of 4 percent, Zeng was quoted as saying.

Registered urban unemployment in 2001 was "below 4 percent," compared with an official 3.1-percent urban unemployment rate last year, according to Zeng. *AFP*

Malaysia's trade surplus narrows

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Hit by declining demand in its key export sector, Malaysia's trade surplus for October narrowed by almost 23 percent year-on-year, the government reported Monday.

In a statement, the Statistics Department said October's preliminary trade surplus was 4.4 billion ringgit ($1.15 billion), as exports declined faster than imports.

This was down 22.8 percent from the 5.7 billion ringgit ($1.5 billion) surplus in October 2000, due to a higher decline in exports of 12.7 percent on-year compared with imports, which fell 10.5 percent on-year.

Over 50 percent of Malaysia's exports are electronic goods, a sector hard hit this year by sluggish global demand, which grew worse after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, Malaysia's largest trading partner.

Malaysia acknowledged late last month it has slipped into recession, after gross domestic product shrank 1.3 percent in the third quarter, the first year-on-year contraction since the first quarter of 1999, when the country was climbing out of the Asian economic crisis. *AP*

Ifo global economic index hits record low

FRANKFURT—The Ifo global economic climate index tumbled to a record low in October, as slumping demand exacerbated a worldwide slowdown, the Munich-based economic research institute said on Monday.

Ifo's KTI index fell to 70.7 in October, down over 40 percent from its April 2000 peak and the lowest level since the index was introduced over 20 years ago.

Ifo said data used to compile the index—collected from over 800 companies and economic institutions in 79 countries—showed estimates about the current economic situation, as well as forecasts for the coming six months had been drastically reduced.

The institute said September's attacks on the United States had increased economic pessimism, but added this would probably have only a short-term effect, with falling oil prices and interest rate cuts boosting confidence as soon as January 2002.

The KTI survey showed expectations of further monetary easing in Europe, Britain and Australia, while interest rates in the US could drop below 2 percent in the coming months.

According to the survey, the euro is currently still undervalued and could rise against the dollar, yen and sterling in the next six months.

Forecasts for economic growth prospects in the next three to five years were significantly more pessimistic than a year ago, with western Europe, Germany and the United States expected to show economic growth of 2.2 percent.

The global economy was expected to show annual growth of 2.5 percent, against the 3.7 percent forecast a year ago, according to the survey, which also showed inflation worries had subsided. *Reuters*

WITHOUT REFORMS

Thai economy condemned to underperform

BANGKOK—Condition: serious but not life-threatening. Prognosis: radical treatment needed for a full recovery.

A health-check on Thailand reveals an economy doing better than some of its recession-hit Asian neighbors, thanks to an extensive agricultural sector but falling short of potential because of deep-seated structural shortcomings.

And with the government preferring the short-term palliative of deficit spending to politically tricky house-cleaning for the long haul, economists are skeptical about Thailand's chances of hoisting itself rapidly up Asia's economic league table.

"We certainly see the next year or so as a very important time for Thailand," said Ian Porter, the World Bank's chief representative in Bangkok.

Thailand, he says, needs not only to deal once and for all with the fall-out of Asia's financial crisis four years ago but also to get itself in shape to take on hungry competitors like China when the world economy eventually turns up.

Porter, like other Thailand watchers, quickly zeroes in on the priority areas for action to reverse Thailand's steady slide in recent years down the global competitiveness charts.

"The issues going forward are about enhancing the investment climate. That means legal and judicial reform, further improvements on trade liberalization and financial and corporate restructuring," Porter says. Much more money must be spent, too, on strengthening one of Asia's weakest education systems.

"It's not some minor fixing on the side that needs to be done," he says. "Under any circumstances, for any government it's a difficult challenge."

The good news is that Thailand can concentrate on reforms free of the massive financial imbalances that led to devaluation on the baht in July 1997, which in turn triggered an Asia-wide currency crisis that plunged the region into recession.

Short-term borrowings have been slashed and reserves rebuilt. The currency no longer looks an Achilles heel even though the central bank remains nervous about capital outflows.

"The risks are not on the external front, at least not at this stage," said a diplomat in Bangkok.

Nor, economists say, is a domestic financial crunch imminent, even though up to 60 percent of outstanding loans in the Thai financial system are bad, written off or underperforming.

"It would take a major contraction to cause damage from here on, and I just don't see a lot more serious downside to the economy," said Andrew Stotz, banking analyst with SG Securities.

Like Japan, Thailand finds itself on the brink of a liquidity trap. Banks are flush with cash but wary of lending, while big companies are still busy repaying debt and do not want to borrow.

"At the moment there's an enormous amount of liquidity in the banking system, which essentially acts as a safety valve. Provided that is sustained, then really there's not a lot of pressure on the banking system," said Vince Milton, head of credit ratings agency Fitch IBCA in Bangkok.

With the pressure off, critics accuse Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of pursuing the "Thailand first" policies that swept him to power in January at the expense of reforms portrayed as being in the prime interest of foreign banks and investors.

"It seems over the past year or two, reform has become a dirty word," Milton said. "It has really been taken off the political agenda as being an unsaleable product."

Reforms have not ground to a complete halt. In particular, the infant state-run Thai Asset Management Corp., set up to centralize the handling of bad loans, has the potential power to force recalcitrant debtors to restructure their operations. *Reuters*

CURRENCIES

Dec. 03, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.115325	1.000000	52.0200
Japan	Yen	0.009039	0.008104	0.4216
United Kingdom	Pound	1.589449	1.425100	74.1337
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.143174	0.128370	6.6778
Switzerland	Franc	0.679662	0.609385	31.7002
Canada	Dollar	0.709584	0.636213	33.0958
Singapore	Dollar	0.609135	0.546150	28.4107
Australia	Dollar	0.580293	0.520291	27.0655
Bahrain	Dinar	2.958578	2.652661	137.9914
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.297420	0.266667	13.8720
Brunei	Dollar	0.607475	0.544662	28.3333
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000107	0.000096	0.0050
Thailand	Baht	0.025412	0.022784	1.1852
UAE	Dirham	0.303737	0.272331	14.1667
Korea	Won	0.000883	0.000792	0.0412
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.896600	46.6411
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.458424	23.8472
France	Franc	0.152450	0.136686	7.1104
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.406859	21.1648
Austria	Schilling	0.072672	0.065158	3.3895
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022226	1.1562
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000463	0.0241
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.150797	7.8445
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004472	0.2326
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005389	0.2803
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022226	1.1562
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.138447	59.2220

NEW TRADE PACT

WTO chief prods richer nations to cut import tariff

NEW DELHI—A top World Trade Organization official has urged richer nations to reduce peak tariffs to developing nations to encourage them to enter a new global trade pact.

Former Thai premier and WTO director general-designate Supachai Panitchpakdi said developing and developed countries should concede ground for a new global trade pact that could counter the worldwide slowdown.

"Providing technical assistance ahead of negotiations would increase the strength of the developing countries. This in turn could increase their flexibility to negotiate," he said at an economic summit here.

"Unlike the Uruguay round where the developing countries left the final agenda to the developed countries and walked out, here they must fight cohesively to ensure that they get benefits intended for them," he said.

The Doha ministerial conference held in Qatar last month saw developing and developed nations reaching a consensus on the need for a new global trade pact and some broad agreements on the points.

Panitchpakdi said developed nations should eliminate subsidies in the agricultural sector, while bringing down peak import tariffs in the non-agricultural sector.

"This is particularly necessary for giving greater access to the developing countries."

He said developing countries must also be prepared to reduce tariffs to match any such concessions.

Panitchpakdi said sectors such as textiles, which was a vital manufacturing segment for developing countries, needed to be given more emphasis in global trade negotiations.

"We need to find solutions to read substance into all the words of the declaration. We will have to make adjustments in a way to convince people to stay with the negotiations," he said.

The launch of a fresh global trade regime is considered as vital for developing countries such as the United States and even the European Union, which are all reeling from an economic slowdown. *AFP*

Air-cons top shopping lists of most Asians

SINGAPORE—Asian consumers hope to beat the heat as air-conditioners top shopping lists for the next 12 months, according to an Asia Market Intelligence survey.

The recent poll of 9,480 people by the market research firm spanned 12 Asian markets—China (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan), Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

Indonesians bucked the air-conditioner trend, placing a refrigerator at the top of their wish list followed by a washing machine.

The majority of Asian households—97 percent—own a refrigerator, according to the poll. Almost nine in 10 have a rice cooker in a region where rice is a staple.

"In general, households across Asia are much more likely to own a rice cooker than a stove or microwave oven," AMI said in a statement.

Taiwanese and South Korean households were less keen on doing the dishes as more than 20 percent owned dishwashers, compared with just 2 percent in Thailand and 4 percent in Malaysia.

Judging by current trends, Japanese brands Sanyo, National/Panasonic and Toshiba stood to benefit from Indonesian refrigerator sales, AMI said.

South Korean brands LG and Samsung dominated washing machine brand share on their home turf, while National/Panasonic leads in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. *Reuters*

Royal baby to deliver little to economy

TOKYO—The much-heralded arrival of a new royal baby on the weekend might have lifted the hopes of some optimists that Japan's long-suffering economy might benefit from the cheer, but economists and investors were skeptical on Monday.

With the country's business struggling through the toughest downturn in decades, analysts said that worries over rising unemployment and worsening household conditions were too serious for a substantial spillover of royal baby joy into spending.

"Consumption is slumping mainly because people are worried about keeping their jobs," said Shinichi Sato, senior economist at Tokyo-Mitsubishi Securities.

"That can't be helped by a baby being born," he said.

Crown Princess Masako gave birth to a girl on Saturday, delivering a bit of good news to a nation more used these days to headlines about rising unemployment and economic stagnation.

Thousands of people flocked to celebrations on the weekend to mark the birth of the baby, the first for Crown Prince Naruhito and his wife after eight years of marriage.

Television shows repeatedly showed shoppers queuing to buy "royal baby" commemoration cookies and sake wines.

But Minako Iida, economist at Deutsche Securities, said most shoppers would remain careful.

"There won't be any macroeconomic impact such as a boost in consumption helping lift GDP (gross domestic product)," she said. *Reuters*

China smashes 200M pirated audio, VCDs

BEIJING—About 200 million pirated or smuggled audio and video discs have been destroyed in 200 Chinese cities as part of a nationwide campaign against piracy in recordings, state media reported Monday.

The effort is believed to be the largest campaign of its kind launched by the ministry of culture, the China Daily said.

It comes days before China is to officially join the World Trade Organization on Dec. 11. The country's integration into the rules-based global trade club means it will have to do a better job of protecting overseas intellectual property rights.

Shanghai alone destroyed 400,000 illegal discs, bringing the city's total this year to 3 million, China Daily said.

Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei province, demolished 1.4 million pirated discs, Beijing one million and Chengdu 800,000, the report said.

Earlier this year, the ministry shut down 223 markets involved in selling pirated and smuggled compact discs and digital video discs around the country, it said.

Long criticized for its rampant piracy, China is facing increasing pressure from its trading partners to protect intellectual property rights and is eager to clean up its image. *AFP*

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MARA Pawnshop Br. of 2202 M. Roxas cor. Pedro Gil St. Sta. Ana Manila Auction Sale on Dec. 11, Tues. at 2:30 in the afternoon, respectively, July 13 - Aug. 11, 2001.
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Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer.

MI MARA Pawnshop of 251 Quirino Ave. Baclaran, P'que M.M. Auction Sale on Dec. 11, 2001, Tues. at 4:00 in the afternoon, respectively, July 13 - Aug. 11, 2001. Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer

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Notice is hereby given that the intestate estate of the late TEODOSIO CADA, JR. has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs per Doc. # 262, Page # 58, Book # 10 Series of 2001 before Notary Pulic EDGAR J. TONOLETE of Carigara, Leyte
(PDI-Nov.20,27 & Dec.4,2001)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given that Certificate of confirmation issued by LTO to RODERICK B. HERNANDEZ for NISSAN EXALTA GRANDEUR with ENG#QG16-000128 and CHA#CDGALSAN16 - A11227 was lost. If no contest receipt new certification will be issued.
(PDI-Nov. 27, Dec.4, 2001)

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SUGGESTED NOTICE OF TERMINATION FORM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE EMPLOYMENT OF **RICO L. CAPATI**, WHOSE PICTURE APPEARS ABOVE AND WHOSE LAST KNOWN ADDRESS IS **B-12-16 A SANTOL ST. TRINIDAD VILL. CALIBOTBOT, BACOLOR, PAMPANGA** HAS BEEN TERMINATED FOR CAUSE BY THE **GARBES & GARBES TRADING** CORPORATION EFFECTIVE **OCT. 26, 2001.**

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MANUEL G. DE GUZMAN

of Angat, Bulacan

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on December 1, 2001 at the age of 81.

The bereaved wife **Dolores Vergel de Dios de Guzman**; daughters **Nora** and **Myrna**; sons **Noli** and **Bobby**; son- and daughters-in-law and grandchildren request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Body lies in state in their residence at Angat, Bulacan. Interment will be on Thursday, December 6, 2001 at 2:00 p.m. at the Angat Catholic Cemetery.

Nicanor O. Bobadilla

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on December 1, 2001 at the age of 67.

His bereaved wife **Pacita**; children **Emmanuel** and wife **Olivia**, **Emma** and husband **Jesse**, **Jun-Jun**, **Shirley**, **Nicanor** and other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Chapel 12a, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

In Loving Memory
on the **Third Death Anniversary** of

VIRGINIA RIVERA BAROT

who peacefully joined her Creator on December 4, 1998

Her family and loved ones request relatives and friends to join them in praying for the eternal repose of her soul.

Holy Masses shall be offered today at 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM at the Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Mandaluyong City.

Im am the way
the truth and
the life. No one
comes to the
Father except
through Me.

John 14:6

Patricia and **Kieron**
Sunny,
Paolo, **Shirley** and **Miggy**
Pia, **Yari** and **Sidney**

You are my everything
My everything to me
My summer, winter, spring, fall
You are my everything
That's what you are
To me

Mommy

We wish to announce the passing of

Corazon A. Santos "Pong"

on December 3, 2001

She will be cremated on the same day. A wake with her ashes will be held from December 4 - 6, 2001 at St. Alphonsus Mary de Ligouri (Magallanes Church).

Please bring her flowers.

The Management and Employees of the
GENERAL ELECTRIC AFFILIATED COMPANIES
IN THE PHILIPPINES

condole with the family of the late

WILLIAM AMES POWERS

(President & General Manager,
General Electric Philippines, Inc. 1955 to 1976)

Born on May 22, 1925 and died on November 30, 2001 in Colorado Springs, Colorado

His bereaved wife **Marci** and their children, **Kile**, **Kevin**, **Kelly** and **Kim** with their families request friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Prayer intentions will be offered at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati City on Wednesday, December 5, during the 12:15 PM Mass.

"Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish
but have everlasting life"
John 3:10

FRANCISCA C. CRUZ

of Baliwag, Bulacan & Corinthian Gardens

Peacefully joined her Creator on December 2, 2001 at the age of 92.

Her loving husband **AURELIO** (†); children **NORMA & FRANCISCO M. DANAO, ALEXANDER** (†) & **MARYLOU HOWALSKI, DORIS & MARIO S. ESPIRITU**; brother **SIMEON CELESTE**; nephews, nieces, relatives & friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Friday, December 7, 2001 at the Loyola Memorial Park Crematorium, Marikina City after the 7:00 a.m. Mass at Arlington Memorial Chapels.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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MOST OUTSTANDING CHAMBER
MVCCI president "Ed" C. Francisco (front row, center) proudly displays one of the plaques, while MVCCI PP Jose Cabungcal (front row, fourth from right) holds the other plaque. Others in photo include MVCCI PP Alfonso de Leon (front row, third from left); Marikina representative Del De Guzman (front row, fifth from right); Jess Tanchanco, MVCCI vice president (front row, third from right) and other MVCCI officers and directors. Not shown in photo is former Marikina Mayor Bayani "BF" Fernando, who was also on hand to witness the awarding.

New Fruitee Iced Tea from Knott's Berry Farm

LOOK around in restaurants, bars and other hangouts and you will find a horde of iced tea drinkers who can't seem to get enough of this refreshing beverage.

Iced tea has become the young adults drink of choice when they want a refreshing beverage to go with their meals or simply when they thirst for a drink that has more zest than water but is lighter than juice.

Knott's Berry Farm, a popular US brand known for high-quality fruit-based products, puts an exciting twist to regular iced tea that's sure to make the young and hip generation come back for more—Knott's Fruitee Iced Tea.

The new Knott's Fruitee Iced Tea is a radically refreshing drink that comes in five delightful fruity flavors—lemon, peach, raspberry, grapefruit and apple.

Apart from the great fruit flavors, another innovation is the sleek packaging. This new drink comes in the first-of-its-kind tetra prisma pack with an octagonal shape that fits naturally and comfortable in the hand.

So quench your thirst for iced tea with new Knott's Fruitee Iced Tea, available at the nearest groceries, convenience stores and supermarkets.

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INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY & TO BID

The Philippine Heart Center (PHC) invites sealed written bids, re: a) supply of labor and materials for the INSTALLATION OF MEDICAL WASTE TREATMENT & DISPOSAL SYSTEM & b) One (1) year contract for JANITORIAL SERVICES.

Only duly accredited bidders/suppliers will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

List of requirements to be submitted:

1. Letter of intent/co. profile
2. SEC registration
3. Bus. License
4. List of clients
5. Financial Statement (last 2 yrs.)
6. ITR (last 2 yrs.)
7. Location Map of Office

**for add'l requirement, pls inquire at purchasing div. @ 922-05-74 & look for noemi* All interested bidders/suppliers must submit their accreditation documents on or before a) Dec. 14, 2001 & b) Dec. 7, 2001 at Purchasing Division.

The PHC reserves the right to disqualify any prospective bidder/s if found that they have submitted falsified documents and/or information and the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

(Sgd.) **ROMEO J. SANTOS, M.D.**
Chairman, PBAC

(PDI--Nov. 27, 28, 29 & Dec. 3, 4 & 5, 2001)

REAL ESTATE

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

Housing authorities see end to sector slump

BY CHARLES E. BUBAN

WE'VE heard the news many times over—in newspapers, in talk shows, even in the Internet—the country's real estate sector is at its pitiable state. In fact, the sector has just reached its lowest point at the close of the year 2000 and the beginning of 2001. Yet, despite the currency and economic crisis that's fueling the demise of the sector, many are still optimistic that this is just a passing thing.

Indeed, people from the real estate sector based their positive outlook in the boom and bust cycle history that it seems to follow. The sector experienced decline from 1984 to 1989 then came up strong from 1994 to 1997 until it headed to another downturn just when President Joseph Estrada took over.

Compelling necessity

Said Rodolfo Valencia, chair and CEO of RGV Group: "Housing is a basic human right. This has been a basic principle in national and international covenants. It is not just a basic need but a compelling necessity. This is why housing and property ownership remains high in the priority plans of every family, the crisis notwithstanding." The RGV Group represents the private sector group in response to government programs and initiatives involving the real estate industry.

This is also one reason housing is not only a government responsibility but an economic imperative, as well. During a recent symposium on Philippine property market, Secretary Mike Defensor, chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, said the Macapagal administration is gearing up toward a more revitalized national shelter program. "Housing is regarded not just political remedy nor a social device, but an economic tool."

National housing program

According to Defensor, the government is pursuing its programs as previously announced in the last State of the Nation Address of the President. "The national housing program will follow uniform guidelines and definitely will provide housing even to the poorest of the poor," Defensor said.

Defensor enumerated several programs being implemented by various government agencies, including:

- **Securitization of Home Mortgage Finance Corporation's existing mortgages.** This program aims to generate more funds for socialized housing by selling mortgages in the form of securities in the secondary market. The HUDCC is currently holding continuing discussions with concerned agencies tasked to formulate workable guidelines and policies on mortgages securitization.
- **Medium-rise Building (MRB) Program.** The program is intended to develop medium-rise housing projects for target beneficiaries. The housing units will be sold at minimal price levels with soft loan packages. The MRB program intends to put into optimal use selected scarce, high value lands, particularly those in the urban and suburban areas, to accommodate the most number of homeless beneficiaries. Under the program, qualified developers may undertake development of medium-rise housing projects, which upon completion, 90 percent will be paid out by the Home Development Mutual Fund or Pag-Ibig. Subsequently, The HDMF will distribute among its qualified members the completed condo units with soft loan packages.
- **Special Presidential Proclamations.** President Macapagal will earmark sizeable tracks of land for development into relocation sites for homeless beneficiaries.
- **Resettlement of the South and North Rails settlers.** This is a two-pronged program that aims to decongest the South and North rails to improve the South of Manila to Manila (vice versa) and North of Manila to Manila (vice versa) train routes and relocate the rail settlers in said areas. The government estimates that there are about 26,000 and 17,000 families occupying the North and South rails areas, respectively.
- **Pag-Ibig In-city Program.** Still on its planning and policy/guidelines formulation stage, the program is a semi-turnkey arrangement between the HDMF and qualified developers for the development of housing projects covering socialized, low-cost and to some extent medium-rise housing projects.
- **Community Mortgage Program.** Features of the program are provided under the Republic Act 7679.
- Streamlining of government's housing policies and guidelines.
- Special funding subsidies for the poorest of the poor beneficiaries.
- Ongoing rationalization of loan takeouts processing and application.
- **Speeding up of land titling process.** The HUDCC requested the assistance of the Department of Justice in the organization of special courts to speed up and facilitate the land-titling process.
- **Streamlining specific policy measures.** To give due significance to government financing institutions, the HUDCC will streamline policy measures requiring specific amounts to be allocated that will form part of housing budget.

Looking at these programs, Valencia added that the present administration should institute long-term and sustainable infrastructure support with definite objectives augmented by sound policies and programs such as putting emphasis on housing sector development and ensuring availability of end-users financing to assure market acceptance.

"Let us not forget about enhancing development activities within the industry and promoting equitable land access by rationalizing the Agrarian Reform Department's land conversion policies," Valencia said.

Encouraging growth in this sector, Valencia is supporting the government push for the Medium-rise Building Program, which is a sensible solution to an already congested Metro Manila area. "Besides, living in these MRBs keep you in proximity to places of work, school, commercial establishment and even your customers, he added.

First cyber mall in RP launched

ELECTRONIC Realty Associates (ERA) Philippines Inc., the local arm of a global real estate sales and services network, recently launched Cyber One Mall, the country's first information technology and electronics mall located at the Eastwood City CyberPark in Libis, Quezon City.

Patterned after the Wanchai Computer City in Hong Kong and the Sim Lim Square in Singapore, Cyber One Mall will occupy the first three podium floors of Cyber One, a 30-story office building now rising beside IBM Plaza.

Haven

The three-story mall will have a gross leasable selling area of 3,500 square meters. Envisioned to be a haven for computer, electronics and mobile phone enthusiasts, it has up to 70 prime store units available for lease to companies engaged in IT-related products and services.

Each floor in the mall is dedicated to a specific product line. The first floor, called the IT Zone, will host computer hardware and software stores. The second floor, dubbed the E-Center, will bring together sellers of electronics-related products and mobile phones. The third floor will accommodate Internet and network gaming cafés and a proposed concept food court.

The concept food court will feature the biggest names in the food industry and will be the scene of nightly live performances by top bands.

Common area

Each floor will also provide a common area for holding product launches, bazaars and other IT- or electronics-related events.

Cyber One Mall is designed to be a one-stop shopping destination catering to the IT and electronics needs of the 3,500 families that will be residing at the 11 residential condominium buildings at Eastwood City, as well as the more than 4,000 office workers at the CyberPark, the centerpiece of Eastwood City.

The mall will also cater to a large clientele made up of residents of neighboring upscale subdivisions such as Acropolis, Green Meadows, Corinthian Gardens, Valle Verde, Blue Ridge and White Plains.

Apart from the primary A and B market, Cyber One Mall also aims to serve middle-income customers in nearby communities by providing a variety of services and products that suit different budgets.

It will be accessible to 16 different barangays comprising 15,000 families within a two-kilometer radius. It will have flexible operating hours to accommodate a day and night market.

New age

Said Enrique Soriano III, chief executive officer and country manager of Era Philippines: "We are looking at a new age in consumer behavior in which consumers want the best value for their money. With Cyber One Mall bringing together the finest names in IT and electronics product and service retailing under one roof, consumers are assured of superior quality and reasonable price."

"As for our tenants, they can look forward not only to the prestige that goes with being a part of the pioneering mall but also to a wealth of business opportunities that will come their way as the Eastwood City CyberPark reaches full development, he added.

CEREMONIAL TOPPING-OFF

The Manila Bellevue Suites, a 236-key suite, "home-away-from-home" type hotel facility, held its ceremonial topping off recently at its site at the Northgate Cyberzone of Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Shown during the ceremonial topping off, from left, are Manny Sy, New Golden City Builders (general contractor); Ben Sythay, Intelgral Tech (construction manager); Ray Guy, RPJ Development Inc. (owners' representative); architect Esteban Tan, Esteban Tan & Associates; Benjie Go, Armstrong Plumbing Contractor; and architect Gavin Tan, Esteban Tan & Associates.

Glasswool use still safe, says international body

GLASSWOOL insulating material is safe, after all.

Asia Pacific Insulation Corp. (Apic) recently released the results of an extensive reevaluation and study made by a scientific working group of 19 experts from 11 countries convened by the Monographs Program of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) regarding the carcinogenic risk of airborne man-made vitreous fibers.

These fibers in the form of wool are widely used in thermal and acoustical insulation in Europe, North America, and now in Asia. Studies published during the 15 years since the previous IARC Monographs review of said fibers provide no evidence of increased risks of lung cancer or of mesothelioma or cancer of the lining of the body cavities, from occupational exposure during manufacture of these materials.

Much of the extensive medical-scientific research that was relied on by the IARC was conducted at leading independent laboratories and universities in the United States and other countries.

Ken Mentzer, president of the North American Insulation Manufacturers (Naima), emphasized that "the IARC reevaluation confirms Naima's confidence in the safety of its members' products for both workers and consumers."

As such, the IARC has changed the classification of glasswool from a Group 2B, meaning "possible carcinogenic to humans" to a Group 3 classification meaning "not classifiable as to carcinogenicity to humans."

Yasay lauds Guingona move against asbestos

FORMER Securities and Exchange Commission chair Perfecto R. Yasay Jr. today urged Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona "to go one step further in the campaign against asbestos by asking government officials, nongovernment organizations, contractors and architects to identify buildings and other facilities that have been built with asbestos-containing materials, so that these same structures must be renovated to become asbestos-free.

At the same time, Yasay said the Vice President's directive to extend health risk benefits to the Department of Foreign Affairs employees is a "heart-warming signal and a positive step toward greater resolve on the part of our leaders to recognize the serious risks posed by asbestos on our people."

Reaction

Yasay was reacting to the decision of the Vice President and the DFA to grant employees health risk allowance of P7,200 each in view of their daily exposure to asbestos-filled ceilings in the DFA building on Roxas Boulevard. In the same vein, the Vice President ordered the replacement of ceilings in every floor of the DFA building on Roxas Boulevard with asbestos-free materials.

The Vice President earlier said he ordered the replacement of the ceilings "because we cannot allow our valued personnel of the DFA to be exposed to cancer."

In a letter addressed to the Vice President, Yasay said he was "extremely happy" that Guingona "has affirmed what I have always been trying to warn our people about—especially government officials, businessmen, manufacturers and those in the construction industry."

Humancarcinogen

Asbestos is commonly used as a raw material for construction like roofing and siding, walls and ceilings, floors, pipes and boilers. It has been classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as a known human carcinogen.

"The example set by Vice President Guingona should spark the banding together of government, civil society and business to work together toward the total ban of asbestos from the local market," Yasay said.

It will be recalled that in 1993, it was reported that some 1,000 Filipino civilian employees at the former American bases of Clark and Subic were reported to have been afflicted with serious ailments caused by asbestos.

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Camp John Hay Manor opens

THERE'S another good reason to come up to Baguio City with the opening of the Camp John Hay Manor.

The Manor is the first hotel that was constructed as part of the development plan for Camp John Hay. It is a 187-unit accommodation facility that boasts of interesting architecture and cozy interiors as well as an enhanced Fil-Am Friendship Garden. Seventy-two units opened Sunday while full operation is expected by 2002.

The four-story structure, which takes the place of the former Main Club, was designed to blend with towering pine trees and provides a magnificent view of the Cordillera mountain range.

The Manor promises five-star service through highly trained staff and world-class facilities. It consists of studio-type, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units to cater to the different needs of individuals, groups and families.

The Manor also has a café and restaurant, a lounge that features a large fireplace, plus the amenities one can find in deluxe hotels. Add to these the numerous recreational and dining facilities that one can enjoy in Camp John Hay: picnic areas, skating and bicycle rinks, basketball court, mini golf course, ballfield, children's playground, ice cream parlor and snack bar, Lonestar Steakhouse, indoor recreation center, duty-free shop, Camp Nike, Angles Bar and a quaint garden café called Chocola-te de Batirol. A Country Waffles outlet recently opened at the 12th Tee. Strumm's and Dencio's Grill are also set to open branches at the camp this month.

The public may also visit John Hay landmarks like the Bell Amphitheater, Liberty Park, Cemetery of Negativism, Mermaid Garden and Igorot Garden.

The Manor was designed by Recio+Casas Architects with interiors by Steven Leach & Associates. It will be managed by Club Leisure Inc., the same group operating the Camp John Hay Clubhouse and the Manila Southwoods Manor.

LG, Otis merger produces Sigma

LG INDUSTRIAL Systems Co. Ltd. and Otis Elevator Co., two of the biggest companies that have been manufacturing top of the line elevators and escalators for close to a century, have merged. The union signifies the birth of the brand name Sigma and continues the commitment and dedication of LG-Otis from Korea in providing the best technology, quality and service to its numerous customers.

To celebrate the launch of Sigma here in the country, a special party dubbed "Rebirth: The Sigma Launch Party" is slated on Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Oriental.

The event, which is organized by Eventscape Manila, will gather delegates from Korea plus the local industry's distributors, architects, engineers and real estate developers for an evening of fun and entertainment. It will be hosted by comedienne Giselle Sanchez and will have retro band Fat Session performing your favorite '70s music. A special raffle also highlights the evening wherein the grand prize is a trip for two to Korea. For inquiries, call up Ria Reyes at 561-7606 or 561-0442.

SHDA, Pag-ibig meet tomorrow

THE IMPLEMENTATION of the newly revised Pag-Ibig housing loan guidelines will be taken up during the joint workshop-seminar of the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG Fund) and the Subdivisionand Housing Developers Association (SHDA) tomorrow at 1-5 p.m. at the Rizal Ballroom C, Shangri-La Hotel, Makati City.

Noel S. Gonzales, SHDA national president, said the workshop aims to make operational the "Consolidated Guidelines of the Pag-Ibig Housing Loan Program," issued Nov. 7, by familiarizing developer-loan originators and other participants on the practical application of the rules, thereby facilitating loan availment and housing acquisition by Pag-Ibig members.

Key officials of Pag-Ibig Fund, including its regional managers, will attend the workshop to assure the clear, uniform interpretation and application of the new housing loan rules by addressing operational issues that may be raised during the forum, Gonzales informed.

Match of Filipino, American entities successful

BY CHARLIE V. GORAYEB
Contributor

THE INFORMATION communication technology (ICT) sector in the Philippines bagged at least eight potential or actual businesses during a unique encounter between Filipino and American enterprises held recently at the Hilton Burbank Convention Center in Burbank, California. The two-day conference dubbed "First ICT, Investment, Real Estate and Tourism Business Conference and Expo" was a complete success.

The need for a hands-on marketing program is the one good lesson that the Creba (Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Associations) delegation learned from this conference in our effort to tap US companies. And the business-matching scheme adopted by the conference organizers is one such approach, perhaps, the only one in getting US companies to the business transactions room. Another big help is the organizers' commitment to follow up on transactions commenced during the conference to its full consummation.

Eyeopener

What impressed us most were the unique conference arrangements. Although the conference was small in terms of space and number of participants, with a hotel as venue, the quality of the event was noteworthy and its complete success was attained particularly in the business matching components of the conference where the organizers prearranged a one on one meeting between Philippines and US participants. Conference organizers headed by lawyer Enrique C. Andres, the CEO of Asia Expo Organization Corp., should be commended for doing a great job.

This promotion scheme for Philippine trade could be an eyeopener for government trade and tourism offices. They should tap motivated private sectors such as the organizers of the event. It provided a good venue and a great opportunity for meeting potential partners right in the convention itself where a very prolific business relationship could be started.

What certainly helped the meeting as much: for the first time, the premier office of the US Department of Commerce, Office of Commercial Service, lent its support and name to the conference. It was heartwarming to see the Office of the US Commercial Attaché in the US Embassy in Manila giving its full support to the Philippine delegates by allowing the use of its video conferencing facilities during the promotion stage of the conference. The US Commercial Attaché officers based in Manila, Val Huston and Aida Miranda, accompanied the Philippine delegates to the convention.

Recent tragic and catastrophic events did not deter the Creba delegation from proceeding to join the trade and real estate mission to Los Angeles. In a speech delivered at the conference, I was assigned the difficult task of talking on the good prospects of the real estate industry in the Philippines amid a worldwide economic plunge.

The Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector got the most of the conference advantages because US companies, which need to outsource their back-end operations, were offered cost-cutting opportunities and were matched with Philippine-based ICT companies. Moreover, most US-based businesses and investors in attendance were presented the options to extend their global reach to the Philippines for their products and services.

Attendees

There were 76 delegates from 37 Philippine companies and 145 delegates from 97 US companies (including walk-ins) or a total of 221 delegates from 182 US and Philippine attendees. Website hits showing good interest to the event were collated as follows: August 2001 (7,352 hits), September 2001 (40,228 hits) and October 2001 (87,284 hits).

The Creba delegation was composed of A.C. Realon Realty & Development Corp., JCR Holding Corp., La Savoie Development Corp., Moldex Group of Companies, Royal Venture Group of Companies, S.N. Realty Homes & Development Corp., The Lakeshore Marketing Corp., Union Bank of the Philippines, V.V. Soliven Realty Corp., Concrete Ventures Group Inc., Goldest Group, Rosmil Realty Development Corp., Baywatch Realty Marketing Co., CSDT Realty, Rina Corp., Primenet Realty Corp., F. S. Dulalia Realty, Pipeline Engineering, and G. Alcantara Holdings.

Rare opportunity

The owners and officers of the realty companies were given the rare opportunity to meet with potential marketing arms of their housing projects and other development projects in the United States. A financial institution, the East-West Bank, a banking institution based in San Marino, Southern California and one of the largest US banks, proposed a financial package to Philippine real estate developers. US buyers of land, housing units and development projects can be financed through their home equity loans. It can be used to pay all their real estate purchase from Philippine real estate companies.

"We have done financing packages to Philippine real estate developers under the guarantee of the Export-Import Bank," said Peter Ramirez, vice president, international banking, East-West Bank. K.Y. Cheng, a top management leader of the bank delineated in his speech the procedures to avail of the financial package, both in the real estate and ICT industry, under the guarantee of the Import-Export Bank. The bank was also represented during the conference.

The conference was full of more success stories, which may be seen on the Asia Expo Organization website: http://www.asiaexpo/p.com containing interesting pages such as complete list of participants, business-matching results and comments from delegates.

For its 2002 projects for the Philippines, the Asia Expo Organization intends to bring the Philippines to other noteworthy conventions in the United States. On deck is the 2002 World Travel Expo on Mar. 8-10, 2002 at the plush Los Angeles Convention Center. The travel and tourism convention will be attended by delegates from other countries worldwide. It is a must for the Philippines to take part in these conventions.

(Gorayeb is the national president of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Associations.)

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMOIES

Mancon-CBDC and Lapanday Development Corp. recently held the groundbreaking ceremonies for Monica Homes, a housing project for Lapanday employees located at Panabo City, Davao del Norte. Mancon-CBDC was responsible for the construction of Tagaytay Highlands, Caylabne Bay Resort, Tagaytay South Ridge Estates, among others. A time capsule is being laid by housing czar Mike Defensor, Rep. Boy Nograles of Davao, Luis Lorenzo and Tomas Lorenzo of Lapanday. Also shown are Mancon-CBDC Mario A. Oreta, Panabo City Mayor Rey Gavina, NHFMC CEO Chito Salud and Allan Teo of Mancon-Berhad, Malaysia.

Informal settlers welcome gains tax exemption rules

HOMEOWNERS' associations of informal settlers welcome the issuance by the Bureau of Internal Revenue of the implementing guidelines on the grant of exemption from the capital gains tax and creditable withholding tax on lands sold under the Community Mortgage Program.

Contained in BIR Revenue Regulations 17-2001, the rules were issued to further facilitate the transfer of titles on lands purchased by associations of informal settlers using CMP loan proceeds granted by the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp., according to lawyer Angelico T. Salud, NHMFC president.

Based on Revenue Regulations 17-2001, Salud cited that CMP homeowners associations shall be guided by the following procedures:

- The NHMFC shall execute a certification that the subject property qualifies and is actually a CMP project.

Said certification shall include the following:

—Certified duplicate copy of the deed of sale to the community/homeowners association.

—Certified true copy of the articles of incorporation of the community/homeowners association.

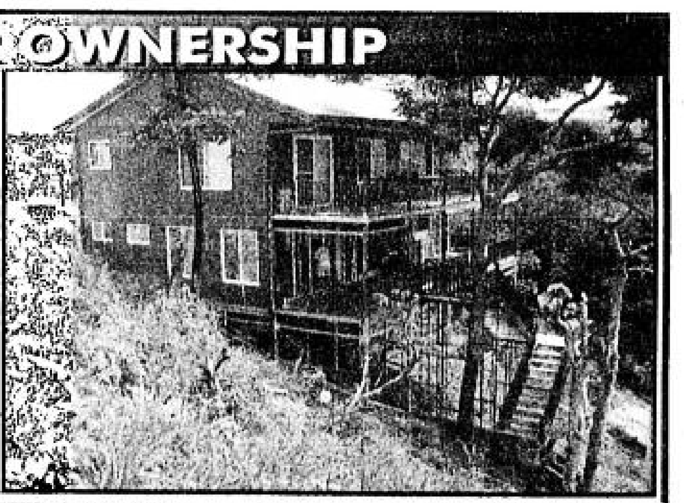
—Masterlist of qualified beneficiaries.

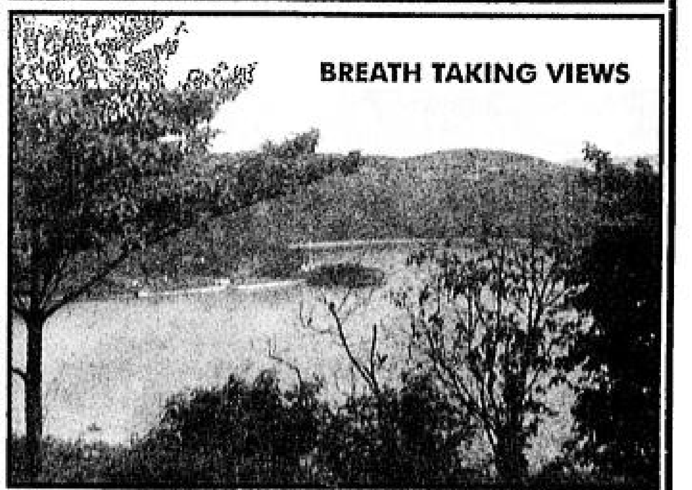
—Certified true copy of the title and latest tax declaration of the property sold to the community/homeowners association.

—Location plan of the lot sold to the community/homeowners association.

- On the basis of said NHMFC certification, the revenue district officer concerned shall exempt from the payment of capital gains tax or income tax, including the creditable withholding tax, if any, the sale of real property under the CMP.
- The taxpayer shall pay the documentary stamp tax.
- The revenue district officer shall issue the corresponding certificate authorizing registration and/or tax clearance upon submission above-mentioned documents, including proof of payment of the documentary stamp tax, within five days from the date of compliance with required documents.
- The community/homeowners association shall then present the foregoing documents to the appropriate Register of Deeds to effect the transfer of the title to the said association.

Salud also said that to assist in facilitating these transactions, the NHMFC will submit to the BIR a summary report of all CMP certifications made on or before the fifth day of the month immediately following the end of each calendar month.





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Important industry issues up at construction summit

AS growth and progression continue to be a few of many challenges and concerns of the nation, the movers in the construction industry has united supporting a summit on Construction Development Agendas or Conda that will make possible the gathering of the industry allies from both government and private sectors to strengthen their network and address the industry's common concerns in the coming decade. Such group of allies is comprised of architects, engineers, builders, contractors, developers, businessman and other professional in the construction industry.

Initiated by the United Architects of the Philippines, in collaboration with MDP Events Management Specialists, the summit will highlight this year's celebration of National Architecture Week to be held on Dec. 12-13 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Important issues relevant to the combined industry of housing and building, construction and real estate development will be tackled. "The summit will cover topics such as Accessing Venture Capital, Leveraging on New-Age Technologies, Developing Global Competitiveness, Building Smart Partnerships, and Best Options for the New-Economy Consumer," says architect Robert Mirafuente, deputy project director of Conda,

Dec. 12 marks the first day of the summit on construction development. The agenda begins in the morning with registration and opening remarks, while in the afternoon an important affair will demonstrate accessing venture capital for the construction and building industry and professions.

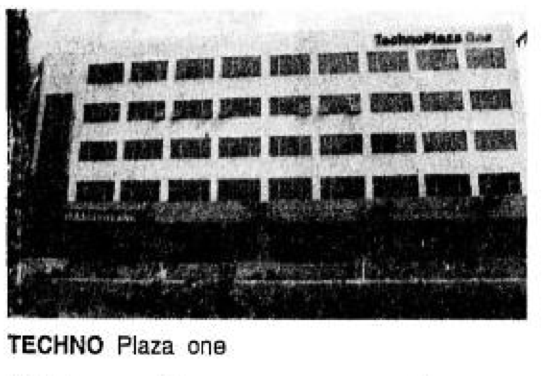
President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will keynote the summit. The speakers for the private sector will be headed by Deogracias N. Vistan, president, Equitable PCI Bank; Carolina E. Carreon, president and CEO, Bayantrade.com; and for the public sector, the speakers will be headed by Zenaida Amelia C. Alonzo, chair, Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp.; and Transportation and Communication Undersecretary Agustin R. Bengzon.

The summit on construction development is headed by an executive committee chaired by Trade Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II, with Interior Secretary Jose D. Lina, cochair; lawyer Miguel Varela and Public Works Secretary Simeon A. Datumanong, vice chairpersons.

In addition, a collage presentation showcasing the industry's capability and offerings in terms of the latest trends, innovations and projects of the participating business groups and professions will present new possibilities, new option and the latest trends in designs, materials, and practices in building and real estate development. This will not only help consumers make the best decisions and choices to meet their needs, but also attract both local and foreign investors.

It is envisioned that a National Plan of Action consisting of specific development strategies shall be forged as a result of this multisectoral participatory process, and which shall be the very basis for charting the development direction and pace of the construction industry and geared toward achieving our concern for shelter, environment, infrastructure, basic services, local governance and poverty alleviation.

Says UAP national president Prosperidad Luis: "This summit will serve as a catalyst for rejuvenating the industry. It will foster a stronger alliance and collaboration among various groups that will lead to a unified local construction and building industry that will be in a better position to compete with foreign players." She adds that we can expect unity that will benefit the construction industry as well as positively affect our national economy.



TECHNO Plaza one

5-level campus-type dev't completed

EASTWOOD City developer Megaworld Corp. recently announced the completion of TechnoPlaza One, a five-level campus-type office development at the Eastwood City CyberPark in Bagumbayan, Quezon City.

TechnoPlaza One boasts a technology-friendly environment that features fully redundant, fault-tolerant telecommunication facilities, a back-up power system that guarantees 100 percent emergency power for the building's occupants and an efficiently designed air-conditioning system that is compatible with the 24x7 work schedule of IT companies.

An ideal location for call centers, research and development offices, data centers and software firms, it will add some 15,000 square meters of premium office space to the CyberPark.

Moldex Realty fepes AFP personnel at Cavite project

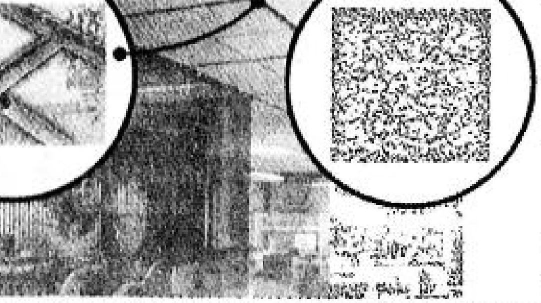
Heritage Homes Trece Martires, an existing 11-hectare housing project in Trece Martires, Cavite, will be home to officers and personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines who signed up for reservation during the grand open house recently hosted by Moldex Realty Marketing Inc.

Called "AFP's Christmas in November," the open house was a whole-day affair intended to give would-be homeowners from the AFP ample time to inspect the property and make their choices.

Heritage Homes Trece Martires is a community of townhomes, rowhouses, duplexes and single-detached units ranging from 30 square meters to 42 sq. m in floor area. House and lot packages are priced from P238,826 to P 634,700 per unit.

Owned and developed by Moldex Realty Inc., Heritage Homes Trece Martires features first-class amenities and facilities typical of a well-planned residential subdivision, such as a clubhouse with swimming pool, basketball court and children's playground.

Adding color and camaraderie to the grand open house was a program participated in by officials and employees of the AFP and Moldex. It was highlighted by the awarding of living room showcases to prequalified buyers. Fun games with cash prizes were also held. Discounts from 10 to 20 percent were granted to qualified buyers.



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BUSINESS

END OF MERCURY DRUG'S NEAR MONOPOLY

Watson's eyes big chunk of RP market

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry is hoping that the multimillion-dollar partnership between billionaires Li Ka-shing and Henry Sy to put up a Watson's chain of drug stores nationwide will break the "near monopoly" of Mercury Drug in drug retailing.

Trade and Industry secretary Manuel Roxas II said one of the reasons why Li's Hutchison Whampoa Ltd. was keen on entering the Philippines was that the country has a large retail medicine market that was controlled by "an inefficient near monopoly that overprices and under-serves the market."

Roxas said the Hutchison-SM Prime tie-up has the capital, retailing know-how and an efficient back office support (in terms of point of sales inventory and management) that could make a big and immediate impact on the market and provide formidable competition to Mercury Drug.

Hutchison-SM Prime will build 200 Watson's Your Personal Store in the country at $500,000 to $1 million each.

Roxas' efforts to bring in cheap drugs from India have been blunted not only by strong opposition from pharmaceutical companies especially from the US but also by the distributors' inability to penetrate the retail side of the market.

Roxas admitted that unless the cheap Indian drugs were sold through the regular drug stores and not only through state hospitals, most Filipinos would continue to pay exorbitant prices for their medicine purchases.

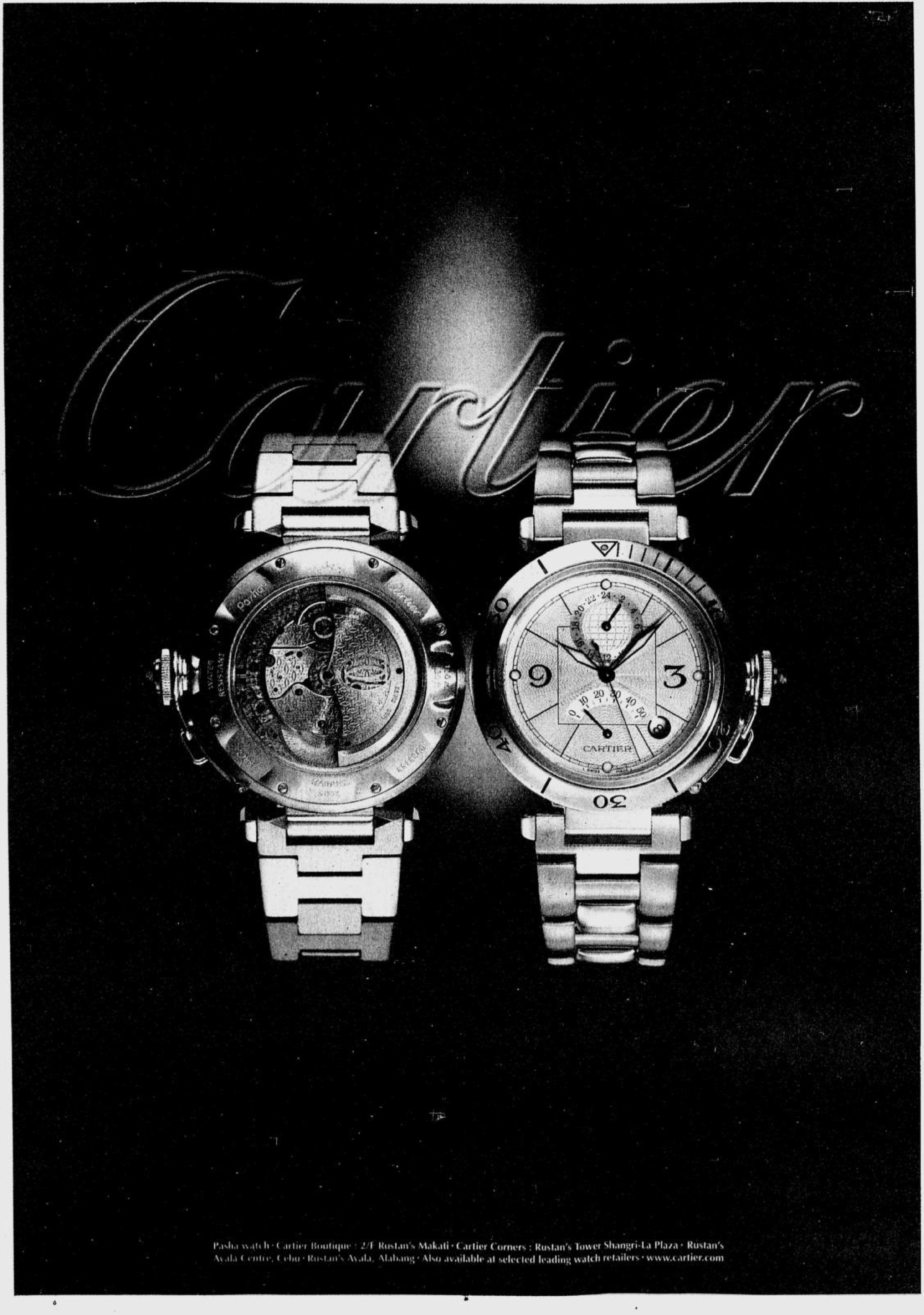
The Mercury Drug, founded by the Que family, ranked No. 20 among the country's top 1,000 corporations last year based on revenues of P28.694 billion with profits of P624 million.

The DTI has so far made four shipments since it first brought Indian drugs into the country last year. In one of its shipments, the DTI claimed that its cargo that was worth P25.8 million was sold at Mercury Drug for P66.78 million. The DTI said this meant that the consumers should have paid only 38 percent of the amount the drugs were sold.

The DTI's parallel importation, which started last year, has been intensified, albeit inconspicuously, despite the pending case filed by the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association, which claimed that the move was illegal because it would violate its members' exclusive distribution contracts in the country.

The parallel imports were undertaken last year after a joint study by the DTI and Department of Health showed that giant drug companies, particularly American companies, were making a killing in the Philippines based on a comparison of prices of similar medicine brands in India. The DTI-DOH study that covered samples of 22 drugs showed that multinational firms were selling drugs in the country at prices 20 times more than their levels in India.

The sample drugs were for common ailments (such as headaches, allergies and diarrhea) and the leading causes of sickness and death in the Philippines (such as tuberculosis, bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, typhoid fever, and hypertension). All the drugs imported by the DTI from India have passed the Bureau of Food and Drug Administration.



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Citibank to issue RP bonds

CITIBANK NA has secured a fresh mandate from the Philippine government to issue at least $100 million worth of one-year, dollar-denominated treasury bills in the coming weeks.

In an interview, National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said the Macapagal administration would use proceeds of the new borrowing to cover its budget needs next year.

The government has so far raised around $750 million to cover its financial requirements.

Edeza told reporters that Citicorp Capital Philippines Inc. tendered an offer that was better than those submitted by ING Barings, JP Morgan Chase & Co., Standard Chartered Bank.

Citibank already had a mandate for the borrowing months ago, but it was canceled when the investment bank asked for a repricing of the transaction.

When the deal was completed, according to Edeza, the borrowing was still lower than prevailing market rates.

He said the spread on the borrowing—net of taxes—would be at 2.5 percentage points over the one-year London Interbank Offered Rate.

The dollar treasuries will be issued through banks' foreign currency deposit units, making the issue the first dollar-denominated government security to be offered to onshore investors, Edeza said. *Clarissa S. Batino*

GMA-7 not for sale

GMA Network Inc. chair/president and CEO Felipe L. Gozon said GMA was not looking for buyers of its shares at this time.

Gozon said the majority stockholders of GMA Network have no immediately plans of selling stake of the company especially at this time when the company has become very profitable.

The statement was issued in reaction to reports that RFM Corp., which has been exploring opportunities in the entertainment business, was interested on buying a stake in GMA Network.

"GMA is financially healthier now than before. It has registered substantial increases in assets, gross sales, operating income, Ebitda and net income," Gozon said.

As of September 2001, GMA's net income increased by 377 percent from last year.

"Also, GMA was able to reduce its indebtedness. We are happy over our company's performance and we are confident that we can achieve the goals we have set for the company," he added.

PLDT earlier offered to buy a majority stake in GMA but the buy-in did not push through.

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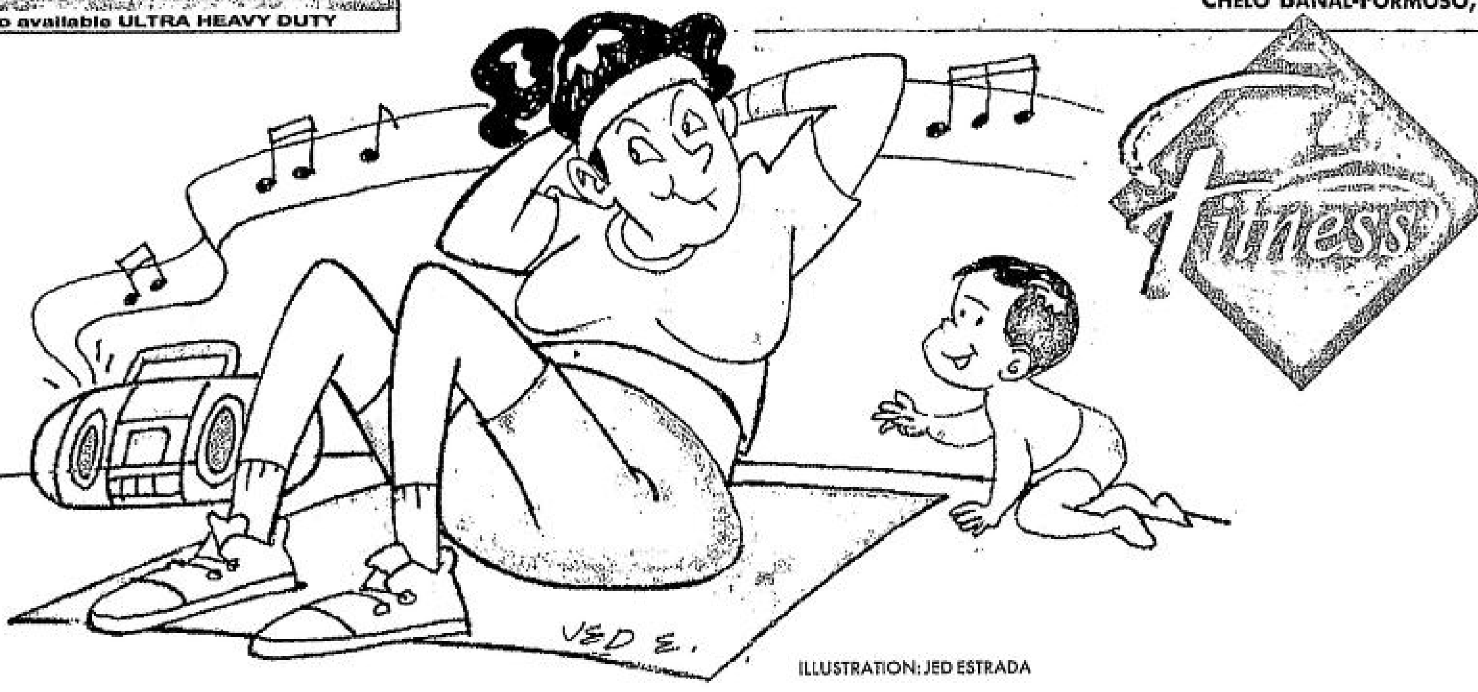

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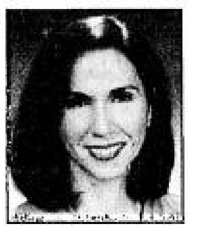
Getting back in shape after giving birth

Part I

WOMEN who have had several children know from experience that it gets harder to lose weight after each pregnancy. A University of Alabama study confirms it. The scientists discovered that women gain and retain an average of 10-19 pounds with their first pregnancy, and 6-11 pounds with each successive pregnancy.

WELL AND GOOD



Tina Aboitiz Juan

In spite of these depressing statistics, it is possible to regain your figure after pregnancy. However, it is not an easy task. The more weight you gained during the pregnancy, the harder it is to get in shape. It usually takes six to 12 months of hard work.

Most women lose about 18-20 pounds within the first six weeks—6-10 pounds for the baby, 3-4 pounds for the placenta and amniotic fluid, and another 6 pounds of extra fluid that was needed to increase blood volume during pregnancy. Whatever you are left with after that is mostly stored fat. Some fat is needed to successfully breastfeed; however, many women store enough fat to breast-feed for the next 20 years!

I was one of those women. I made the mistake of gaining 50 pounds in my last pregnancy. I will never forget the year that followed. I never worked as hard in getting back in shape. I swore that if I ever got pregnant again, I would never gain that much weight. To get back in shape quickly, you should exercise while you are pregnant and gain only the necessary amount of weight.

When to return to exercise

While the changes in pregnancy are slow and gradual, these changes are reversed in about six weeks. Therefore, women who have normal deliveries are told to wait four to six weeks before returning to exercise, while Caesarean section mothers are told to hold off exercising for six to eight weeks. The body needs time to heal whether from natural or C-section delivery.

An increasing number of doctors and fitness experts are now recommending that women start doing special exercises of a gentle nature the day after giving birth. They have found that women who follow this advice heal faster and regain their strength and energy quicker than women who are completely sedentary.

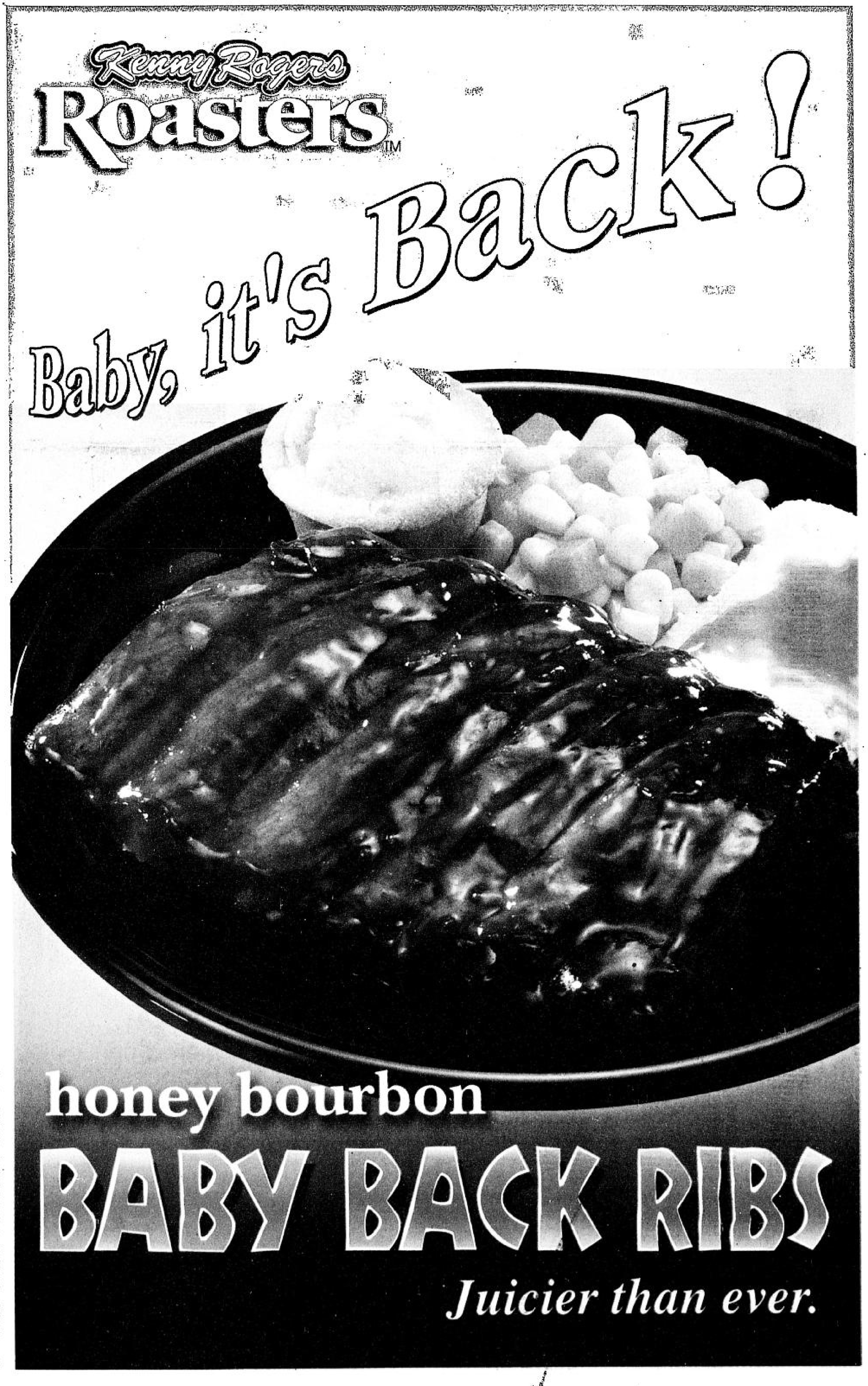
The most immediate fitness goal during the six-week period before a normal exercise program can be resumed is to restore strength to the muscles most stressed by pregnancy and the muscles that are needed in taking care of the baby. These are the abdominal, pelvic floor, upper and lower back muscles.

Abdominal muscles

Why do you still look pregnant after giving birth? Because your abdominal muscles are still stretched and lengthened and now hang loosely since the baby is no longer inside. In addition, there is usually a considerable amount of fat that has been stored in that area. The abdominals need to be brought back to their "shortened" state of pre-pregnancy through abdominal contractions. Gentle abdominal contractions can be started, even for Caesarean section mothers, while still lying in the hospital bed. This will help heal the inner abdominal layers that have been cut through. These abdominal contraction exercises are also called "belly breathing." Keeping your knees bent, inhale and expand the abdomen. Exhale and contract abdominal muscles as if pulling your navel toward your spine. Inhale for a count of five and exhale for a count of five. Do about 10-20 repetitions a day.

Once you can stand comfortably, add pelvic tilts. Do this by tilting the bottom portion of your pelvis forward as you compress your abdominal muscles toward your spine.

GETTING/ p.C2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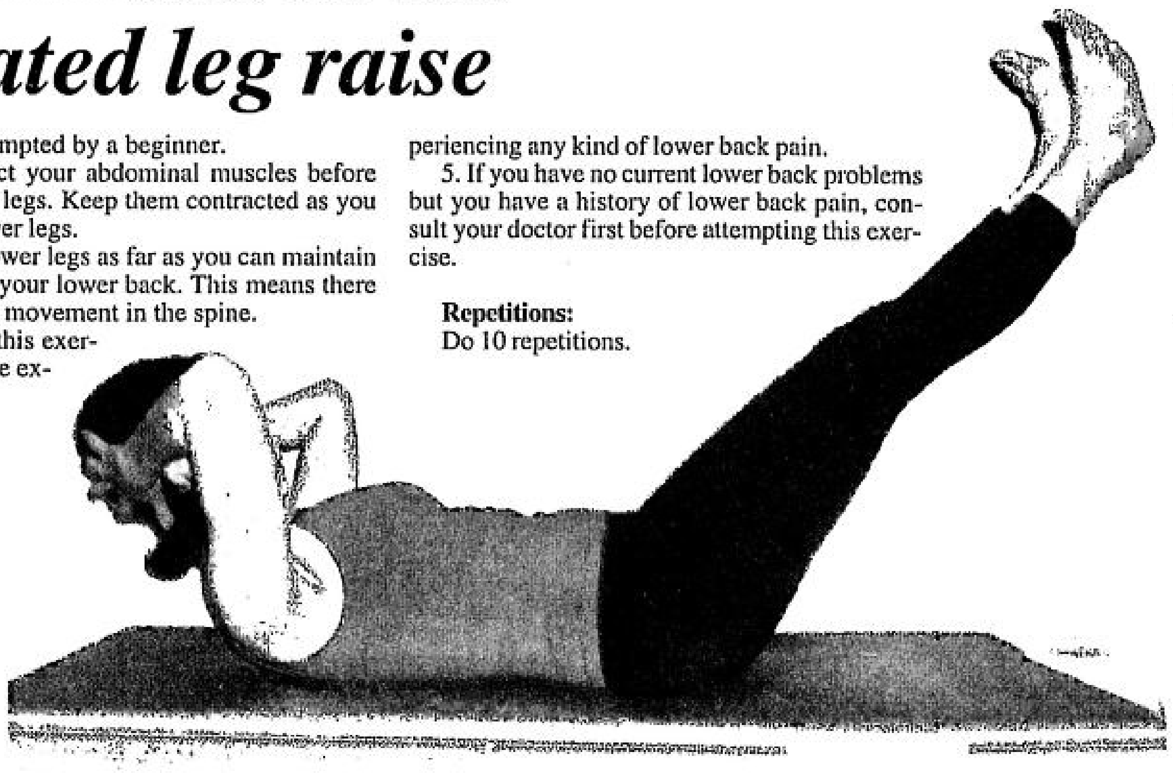
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Rotated leg raise



THIS advanced exercise strengthens the abdominals as stabilizing muscles. There is also some emphasis on toning the buttocks and inner thigh muscles.

Equipment:
Exercise mat.

Exercise technique:

1. Lie on your back with your legs over your hips facing the ceiling, hands behind head, and upper body curled upward.
2. Rotate your legs so that your heels are touching each other and toes are facing outward. Do this by squeezing your buttocks and inner thighs together.
3. Slowly lower your legs as you inhale.
4. Just as slowly, raise your legs as you exhale.

Performance tips:

1. This is an advanced exercise that should never be attempted by a beginner.
2. Contract your abdominal muscles before lowering the legs. Keep them contracted as you raise and lower legs.
3. Only lower legs as far as you can maintain control over your lower back. This means there should be no movement in the spine.
4. Avoid this exercise if you are experiencing any kind of lower back pain.
5. If you have no current lower back problems but you have a history of lower back pain, consult your doctor first before attempting this exercise.

Repetitions:
Do 10 repetitions.

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Hair reflects person's character

"IF you feel good about your hair, you feel good about yourself," world-renowned hairstylist Andy Uffels said during the Pantene forum on hair science and product technology held in Bangkok, Thailand recently.

Uffels was the Dutch Hairdresser of the Years 2000 and 2001. He was the youngest to hold such title.

Since then, he has consistently won numerous awards, including Press Stylist of the Year and Avant-Garde Stylist of the Year. To Uffels, hair expresses one's personality, even emotion. He identified at least four different communication or "dialect" types:

- Reserved type—9 percent of all women. She does not need to express herself with her hair. She believes that her inner self is all she needs. She is natural and typically does not depend on fashion to express herself.
- Individual type—43 percent of all women. She is very secure, fashion-conscious and excellent at communication. She is ambitious and adventurous in her fashion statement.
- Emphatic type—30 percent of all women. She is very reliable, orderly, sporty and not so fashion-conscious. She is always groomed, but never touches her hair.
- Feminine type—18 percent of all women. She uses her hair to accentuate her femininity, and appears demanding, secure and elegant. She uses her hair to attract attention and recognition.

Citing the importance of healthy hair in fashioning out any particular hairstyle, Uffels said: "The quality of communication depends on the material quality of the hair."

"All [hair] dreams become a reality as technology advances. With the right styling products and tools, such as the new Pantene collection, you can achieve the end-look that you want," said Uffels, global Pantene artistic director.

STAYING POWER

Dep, the byword in premium hair styling gels, has just introduced it's latest variant in the market, the Dep Sport Gel with Ultimate Xtreme Hold (Level 9). The new product provides the strongest holding yet mild water-based gel formulation available in the market. Xtreme locks your look in place all day. The new Dep Sport Gel line is available in three sizes—the 12-oz bottled gel, 8-oz spray gel and the 4-oz tube gel—at all leading department stores and supermarkets nationwide, and is exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corp.

Getting back in shape after giving birth

(From page C1)

Natural delivery mothers can progress over the next few weeks to abdominal front curls by putting two pillows behind their upper back, then one pillow, then none. C-section moms have to wait until the inner layers of their incision heal and they get their doctor's clearance.

Pelvic floor muscles

The pelvic floor muscles surround the vagina and anus. They are the muscles that hold the contents of your abdomen against gravity. There is extra pressure on these muscles during pregnancy. They are stretched with natural childbirth and traumatized by an episiotomy (surgical incision to enlarge the vagina to accommodate the baby's birth).

Even if you give birth by C-section, it is still important to strengthen these muscles since they get flabby with age. Weak pelvic floor muscles cause urinary incontinence (urine inadvertently leaking out of the bladder).

Kegel exercises, named for the gynecologist who invented them, can be done anywhere by contracting and releasing the pelvic floor muscles. You'll know you are working the right muscles if you pretend to stop the flow of your urine.

Do about 25 repetitions the first few weeks. Build up to 100 repetitions daily by doing five to 10 at a time. If you do this for life, as all women should, you will probably not need adult diapers in your menopause or old age.

For questions or past articles and exercises, visit www.tinajuanfitness.com

This is a reprint of a previous column. Ms Juan is on leave.

Battling the silent crippler

BY CHAT ALEJANDRO

OSTEOPOROSIS is a disease that has been ignored for many years now by many people. They used to think of it as a natural occurrence in old age. The "silent crippler" is the term given to osteoporosis, because a person afflicted by the ailment may not be aware of it unless a fracture is detected.

Hip fractures are serious and costly, according to Dr. Pierre D. Delmas, president of the International Osteoporosis Foundation, guest of honor and main speaker of a scientific symposium on the "Latest Advances in the Treatment of Osteoporosis: Improved Patients Convenience," sponsored by the Osteoporosis Society of the Phils. and Merck, Sharp and Dohme (MSD).

Dr. Delmas explained that the incidence and risk of osteoporosis was generally lower in men because they achieved a higher peak of bone mass and could afford to lose more bone as they grew older.

Men also have a shorter life expectancy than women. Besides, men do not experience abrupt reduction of circulating sex hormones together with a period of accelerated loss of bone mass, like women undergoing menopause.

Poor nutrition, sedentary lifestyle, excessive smoking, alcoholism or using steroids for medications also increase the risk of fracture in both men and women.

Disastrous effects

For people suffering osteoporotic fractures, effect on quality life is disastrous. Severe back pain, decrease in height, limit in body movement, stooped and unsightly posture and disability are the outcome of spinal fracture. On the other hand, hip fractures always require hospitalization. Most of those who are afflicted with a hip fracture cannot walk on their own and may even die because of this.

Inadequate nutrition and lack of or no proper exercise are some factors influencing bone loss in women. But in postmenopausal women, rapid bone loss is mainly caused by gradual loss of estrogen, a hormone produced by the ovaries that regulates menstruation and maintains bone quantity and strength. Most common fractures are in the hips, wrists and spines. Decrease in height and spinal curving are due to spinal fracture. These fractures can happen by even the simple stress of daily life activity, such as lifting a bag of groceries can break a weakened and fragile bone.

Dr. Delmas says women approaching menopausal stage and even men in their late 50s or early 60s must be properly educated about osteoporosis and should be aware of its ill effects on their bodies. They must see their doctors and have a test to detect the disease at its earliest stage for cure or prevention.

In addition to menopause, risk factors for osteoporosis include low bone mass, a family history of osteoporosis, Caucasian or Asian ancestry, thin or small build, smoking, heavy alcohol use, too little or inadequate calcium intake, use of certain medications such as long-term corticosteroid therapy and early menopause (before age 45). However, a woman may have none of these risk factors and still have osteoporosis.

Quick, painless, noninvasive tests are available to measure Bone Mineral Density (BMD) and determine whether or not someone has osteoporosis. Women who are concerned about their risk of osteoporosis should discuss with their doctors about whether or not a BMD test might be appropriate for them.

Weekly dosage

Dr. Delmas stressed the importance of compliance when it came to treatment as most osteoporosis sufferers were elderly. However, with the recent availability of a new once-a-week dose of alendronate sodium, a nonhormonal, bone-specific oral therapy used in the treatment of bone disease, primarily osteoporosis, Dr. Delmas said sufferers did not have to miss a pill as compared with having to take a daily dose.

Alendronate, marketed in the Philippines as Fosamax, belongs to a class of drugs known as bisphosphonates. It works by reducing the activity of the cells that cause bone loss by decreasing the rate of loss. Moreover, clinical studies showed that alendronate also works by increasing the amount and strength of bone in most patients.

Alendronate increased bone mineral density, a measure of bone strength—nine out of 10 patients with osteoporosis in as little as three months for most, while maintaining normal bone quality. It reduced the risk of hip fractures by 63 percent in 18 months, and the risk of painful spinal fractures by 59 percent as early as one year after beginning therapy. Side effects associated with alendronate were generally mild and did not cause patients to discontinue therapy.

HEART OF THE MATTER

The Foundation for Lay Education on Heart Disease Inc., with the Department of Health, Department of Education, Culture and Sports and Department of Interior and Local Government, opened its First Philippine National Convention on preventive cardiology recently at the grand ballroom of Hotel Inter-Continental, Makati City. Cutting the ceremonial ribbon are Johnny Litton, Imelda Cojuanco and Nelli Bengson with Dr. Antonio Sibulo Jr., Dr. Ken Villanueva and Dr. Adolfo Bellosillo.

Bone banking technology now available

FOR THE PAST 20 years, significant advances have been made in the field of reconstructive orthopedics here in the Philippines. Modern technology has enabled medical experts to use bone from nonrelated donors to replace or repair a diseased bone part of another. The facility that retrieves, processes, stores and distributes such bones for safe clinical use is a bone bank.

The St. Luke's Bone Bank has a state-of-the-art, ultra-low temperature freezer that allows bone and other biologic tissues to be stored. After a potential donor undergoes rigid screening tests, the bones are retrieved under sterile conditions, properly packed and stored in the freezer for future use. There is no compatibility testing necessary and the probability of rejection is very low, unlike in other organ transplants.

The St. Luke's Bone Bank enables the orthopedic surgeon to perform reconstructive surgery by replacing bone stock deficiency and bone loss with bones from another individual. Together with the appropriate orthopedic implants, the surgeon may consider the use of more bone tissue necessary, and use the processed bone from the boric bank through bone transplantation. This can be performed in orthopedic procedures like complex primary and revision total joint replacements, spine and joint fusion surgeries, trauma reconstruction, reconstructive pediatric surgeries and limb-saving surgeries in selected cases of benign and malignant bone tumors.

Under the joint supervision of the Institute of Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine and the Research and Biotechnology Division, St. Luke's Bone Bank follows quality manufacturing processes and quality assurance steps recommended by the American Association of Tissue Banks and the Asia-Pacific Association of Surgical Tissue Banking.

St. Luke's Bone Bank aims to coordinate with the public through information dissemination and other educational endeavors to increase the awareness of bone transplantation and bone and tissue donation, according to Dr. William T. Lavadia, chief operating officer of St. Luke's Bone Bank.

Through the St. Luke's Medical Center's Bone Bank, orthopedic surgeons can now offer a viable surgical option of limb preservation not readily available before, and help improve the quality of life.

Call St. Luke's Institute of Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine at 723-0301 local 4155.

Women doctors now online

THE PHILIPPINE Medical Women's Association (PMWA), a sociocivic organization composed of more than 4,000 women-doctors across the country, recently launched its official website, www.pmwa.org.ph. The association is affiliated with Sun Milady, a comprehensive financial package from Sun Life Financial Services of Canada that is designed exclusively for women's health.

Established in 1948, PMWA is an affiliate of the Medical Women's International Association, a nonpolitical, nonsectarian and nonprofit making association of medical women representing women-doctors all over the five continents.

Top of PMWA's list of community projects are educational undertakings for its members, crisis intervention, medical/dental clinics, cancer screening, pap smear, harelip and cleft-palate charity operations and child-to-child programs.

The official website is a venue for information dissemination of medical news and healthy living. It also provides a valuable network of communication between members in the sharing of medical information updates and project news.

To join PMWA, go to the online registration program, click member log-in and register online. Current members who have not yet registered online are likewise encouraged to log-on now to avail the benefits of PMWA's affiliation with Sun Milady.

Free bone density exam

OSTEOPOROSIS is a disease that can potentially affect each one of us because bone loss becomes imminent as we get older. However, one can still significantly lower the risks if the disease is discovered early and if proper treatment will be immediately sought.

Healthway Medical Clinics-Binondo provides free osteoporosis screening on Dec. 4, 1-5 p.m. HMC-Binondo will offer free bone density scan to help interested patients and clients know the overall strength of their bones.

According to Dr. Joseph Lee of HMC-Binondo, osteoporosis can be difficult to detect in its early stages so it is important that one should be completely aware if he is particularly vulnerable to such disease. Dr. Lee also emphasizes that although bone lost cannot be restored, further bone loss can be prevented if one will only immediately take proper treatment and medications.

Visit HMC Binondo at 2/F Paramount Building, Quintin Paredes Street, Binondo, Manila. Call 241-2066/2250.

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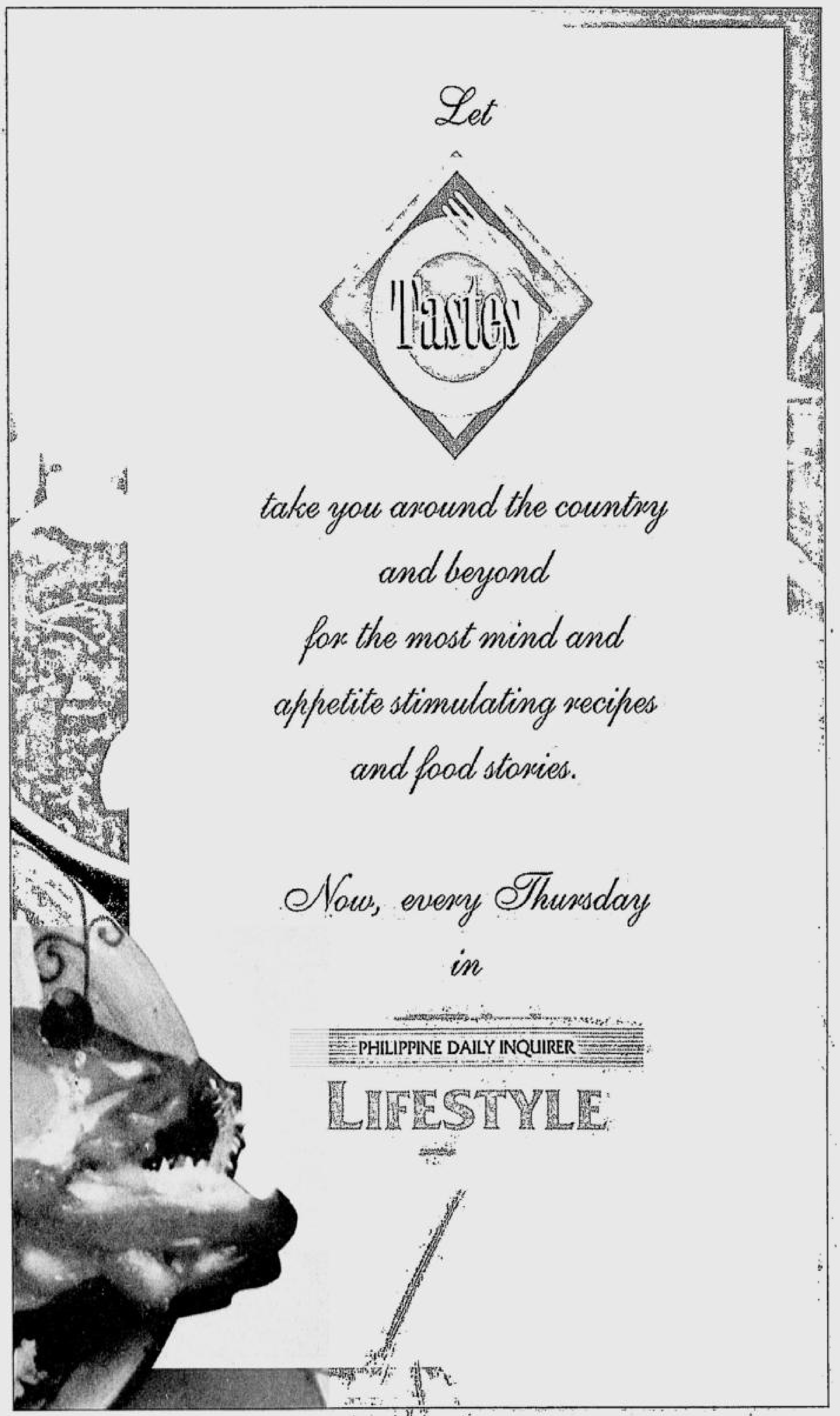

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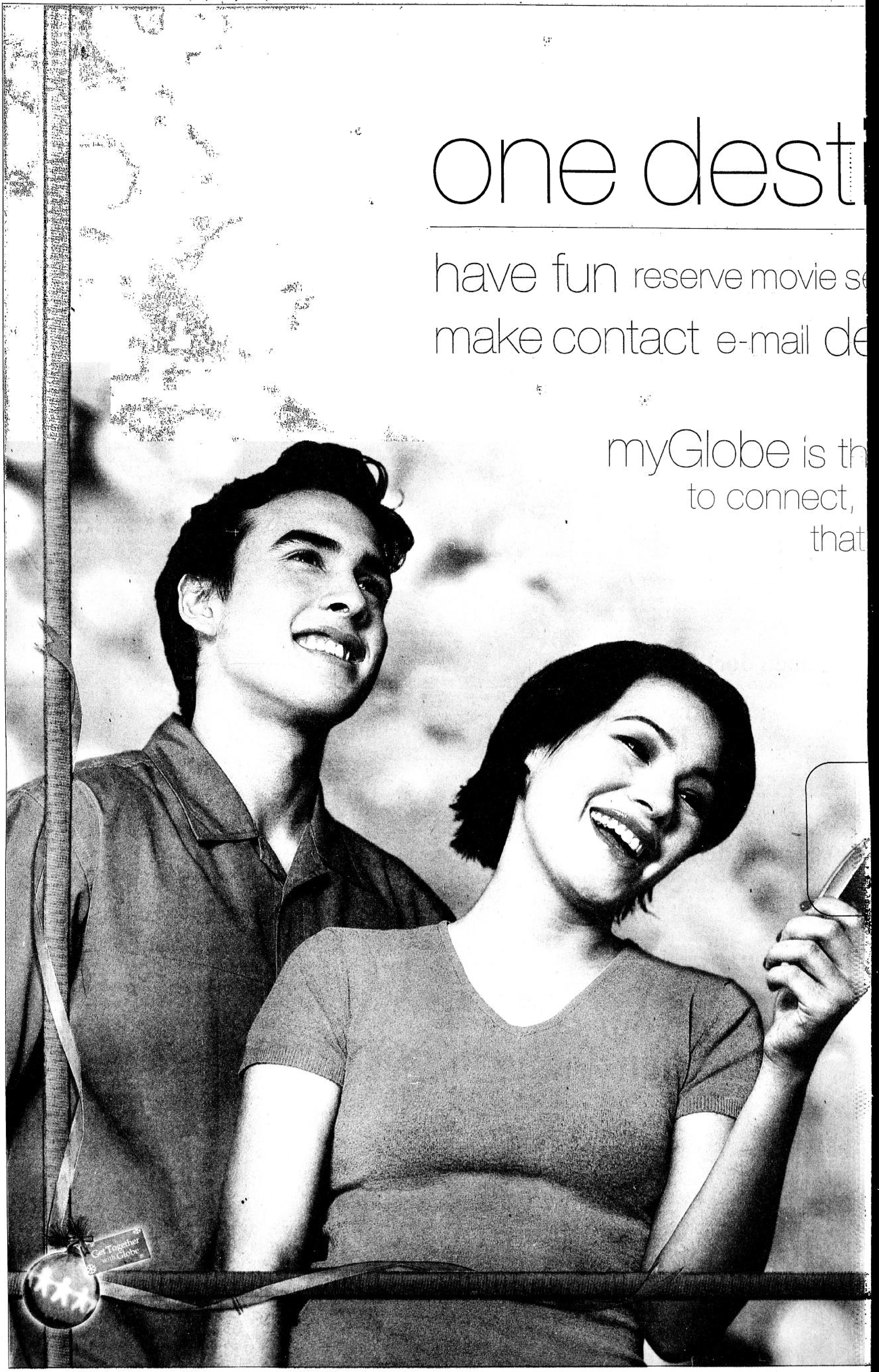
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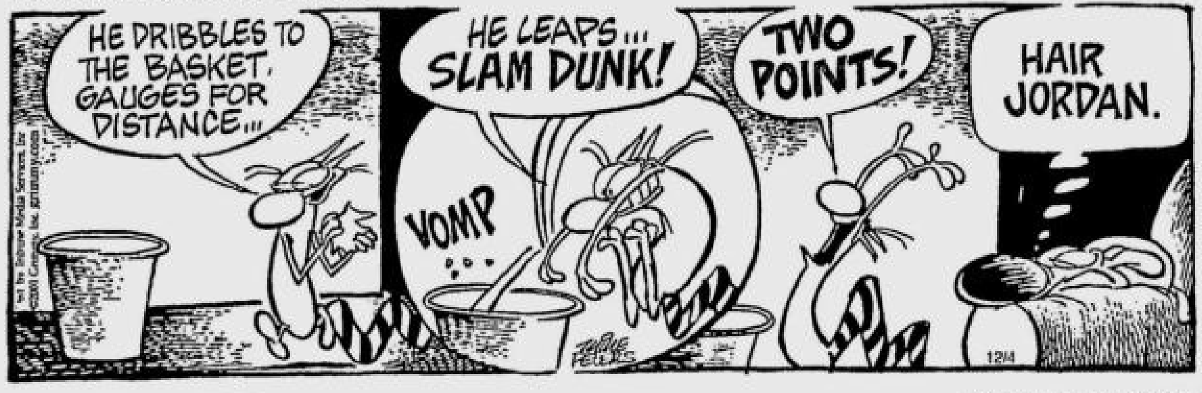
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS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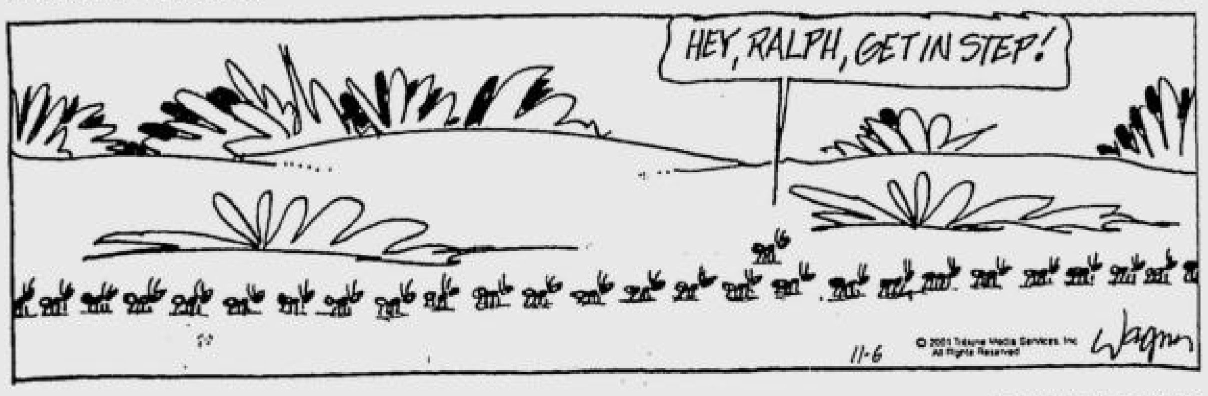
BY FRED WAGNER


HEY, RALPH, GET IN STEP!
11-6
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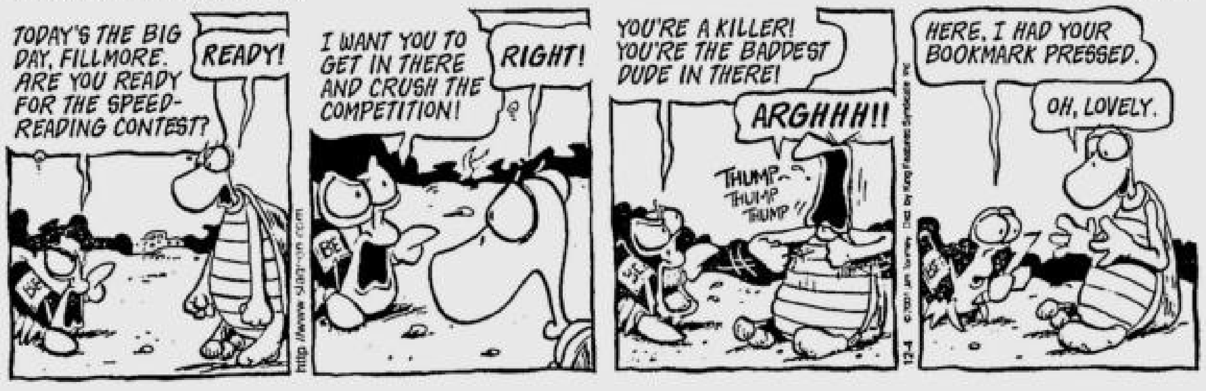
Wagner

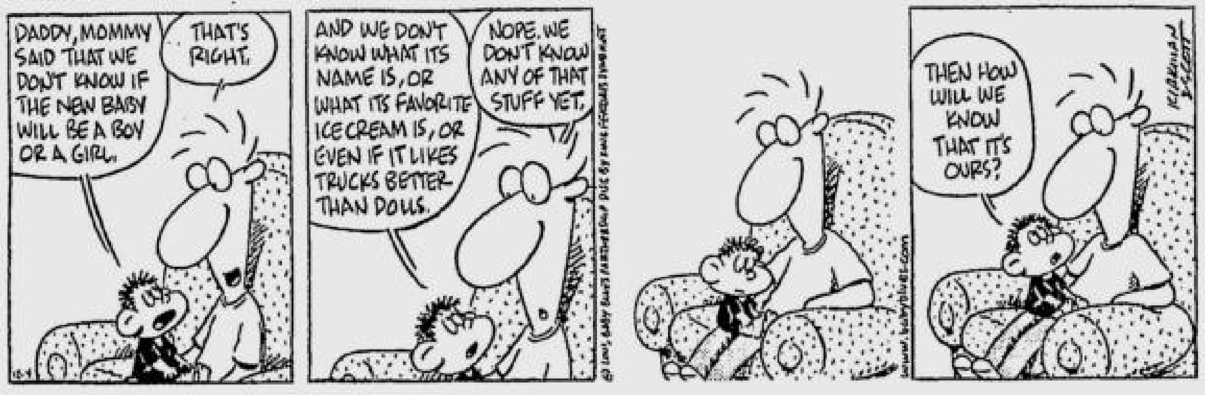
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


TODAY'S THE BIG DAY, FILLMORE. ARE YOU READY FOR THE SPEED-READING CONTEST?
READY!
I WANT YOU TO GET IN THERE AND CRUSH THE COMPETITION!
RIGHT!
YOU'RE A KILLER! YOU'RE THE BADDEST DUDE IN THERE!
ARGHHH!!
THUMP THUMP THUMP
HERE. I HAD YOUR BOOKMARK PRESSED.
OH, LOVELY.
http://www.slagoon.com
12-4

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DADDY, MOMMY SAID THAT WE DON'T KNOW IF THE NEW BABY WILL BE A BOY OR A GIRL.
THAT'S RIGHT.
AND WE DON'T KNOW WHAT ITS NAME IS, OR WHAT ITS FAVORITE ICE CREAM IS, OR EVEN IF IT LIKES TRUCKS BETTER THAN DOLLS.
NOPE. WE DON'T KNOW ANY OF THAT STUFF YET.
THEN HOW WILL WE KNOW THAT IT'S OURS?
KIRKMAN SCOTT
www.babyblues.com

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jeff Bridges, Wink Martindale, Marisa Tomei, Chelsea Noble, Tyra Banks

Happy Birthday: Be firm. Don't allow anyone to mess with your goals. If you concentrate on what you enjoy and excel in, you'll do well. If you are confident, you'll impress others. Your numbers: 3,5,17,29,32,36

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Use your Aries willpower on daily battles. You can find your way through a minefield better than most. Concentrate, delve into necessary tasks wholeheartedly and don't falter.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Take things in stride. You may have difficulties with a friend or relative. Don't confide in anyone today. Sort situations out as best you can.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You are likely to spend more than anticipated if you go shopping for gifts. It's a much better idea to spend a day of festive cheer with family or friends.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Patience and understanding will be required to accept changes at home and at work. Talk to a trusted friend about any personal issues bothering you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Get moving. A good friend will give you honest answers. Short trips or visiting a distant friend will be more exciting than you imagined. Alterations to your appearance will help you feel better.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): It's time to put your finances in order. If you lend or borrow money, you will regret it. Deal with problems in a one-on-one discussion. If other people interfere, you'll never resolve anything

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Your attitude is up and down like a yo-yo. Although it is important to speak your mind and defend your rights, be careful not to burn bridges. Self-deception may lead you in the wrong direction.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Plan your day with care and take precautions. Injury is likely if you try to do too much too fast. To avoid ending up in a quandary over trivial matters, be patient and considerate of others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Take care of your financial future. Deception regarding joint finance is likely unless you stay on top of transactions. Examine closely all contracts and agreements that are offered.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Being observant can save trouble later. Your empathy and patience will help distraught people who are unable to solve their own problems and make you feel good about yourself.

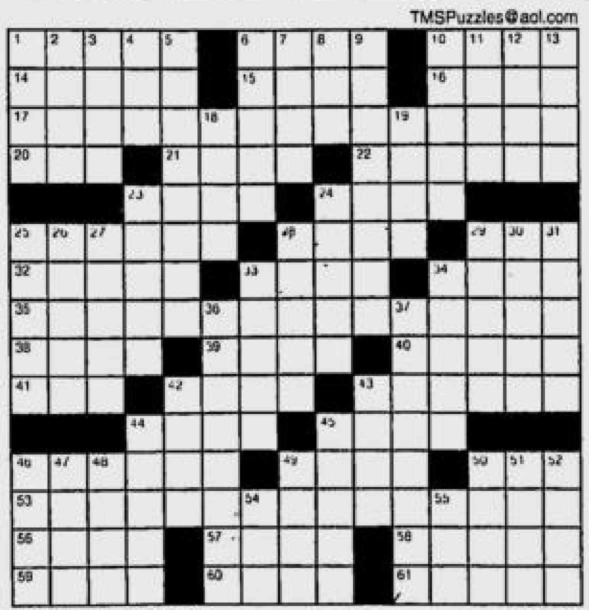
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Stay put or at least make sure all your personal papers are in order. Problems with foreigners or authority figures could lead to confinement or delays. Preparation and organization are the key today.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): If you are too good-natured or accommodating, someone may take advantage of you. Proceed with caution as a trusted individual may be trying to undermine you. Don't be too quick to join an organization that you haven't researched well.

Birthday Baby: You're up at dawn and raring to go. You can keep any group hopping and entertained. You're fun-loving, generous and willing to pitch in for anyone in trouble.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com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By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

10/19/01

ACROSS

1 Daring feat
6 Gift-tag word
10 Masculine
14 Book after Daniel
15 __ avis
16 Pint drinks
17 Hardware store bargain?
20 Wet soil
21 Best of Hollywood
22 Holy city?
23 Brief bad mood
24 Flight-school final
25 Discerning
28 Helper
29 High times
32 Tennyson's "__ d'Arthur"
33 Palo __, CA
34 Robert of "Jaws"
35 Wine shop bargain?
38 Greek letter
39 Fully versed about
40 Hesitate
41 Hesitator's sounds
42 Contract in wrinkles
43 Lodging for troops
44 Let up
45 Destiny
46 Egg dish
49 Russian saint
50 Which person
53 Caterer's bargain?
56 Cleveland's lake
57 Concerning
58 Lena or Marilyn
59 __-do-well
60 Putin's rejection
61 Is on a quest for

DOWN

1 Pretense
2 Bean paste
3 Exploited
4 Fresh from the factory
5 Gifted
6 Forward section
7 Tabula __
8 Magnetite or hematite
9 Elephant's ancestor
10 Thomas of "That Girl"
11 Out of the wind
12 Obscene
13 Exxon, once
18 Garfield's buddy
19 Composer Porter
23 Kama __
24 Passive protest
25 Astonish
26 On the wagon
27 Jogs
28 Distribute
29 Company on the move?
30 Old hat
31 Endearing
33 Palmer of golf
34 Climb
36 Honoree of element 99
37 Tombstone inscriptions
42 Film critic Pauline
43 Purses
44 Senior
45 Number of warships
46 Harbinger
47 Bog down
48 Adams or Falco
49 Hideous creature
50 Used to be
51 Quantity of hair
52 Pindar's poems
54 Whatever
55 Fish eggs

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

P	A	A	R	■	B	A	S	I	E	■	S	W	A	M
A	B	L	E	■	A	N	I	M	A	■	P	E	R	U
M	U	S	T	A	R	D	G	A	S	■	A	B	E	L
S	T	O	O	D	■	I	M	M	I	G	R	A	T	E
■	■	■	R	E	L	E	A	S	E	R	■	D	E	S
B	A	T	T	L	E	■	■	■	R	A	N	D	■	■
A	D	A	■	A	S	I	A	N	■	M	O	R	A	L
H	I	K	E	■	S	O	N	A	R	■	D	E	L	I
S	T	E	V	E	■	U	N	T	I	L	■	S	O	N
■	■	T	E	A	S	■	■	■	T	I	S	S	U	E
A	S	H	■	S	H	E	E	R	E	S	T	■	■	■
S	P	E	C	T	A	C	L	E	■	L	U	C	R	E
T	O	R	O	■	D	O	U	B	L	E	C	H	I	N
I	R	A	N	■	E	N	D	U	E	■	C	O	C	O
R	E	P	S	■	D	O	E	S	T	■	O	W	E	S

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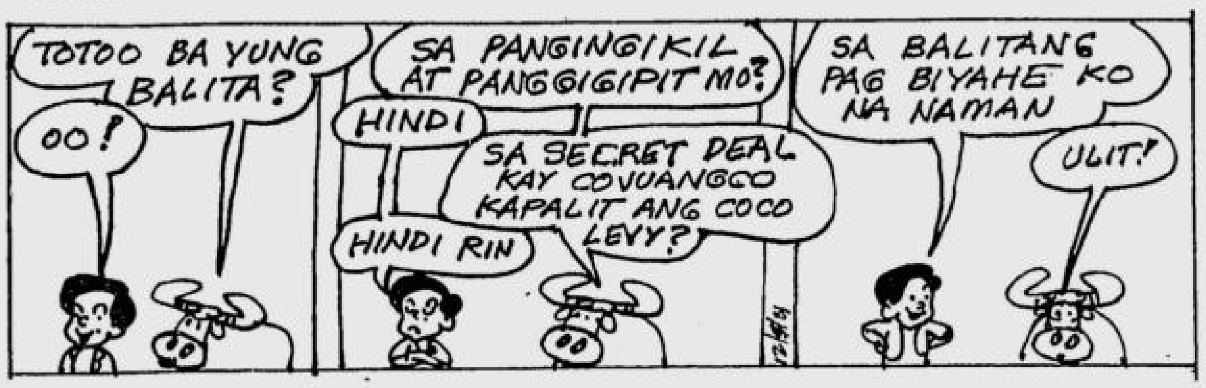
10/19/01

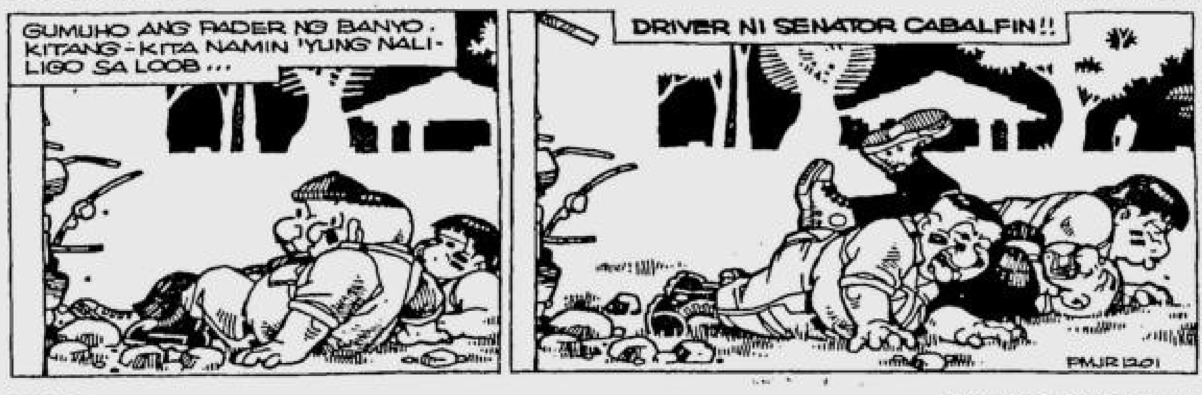
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


TOTOO BA YUNG BALITA?
OO!
SA PANGINGIKIL AT PANGGIGIPIT MO?
HINDI
SA SECRET DEAL KAY COJUANGCO KAPALIT ANG COCO LEVY?
HINDI RIN
SA BALITANG PAG BIYAHE KO NA NAMAN
ULIT!

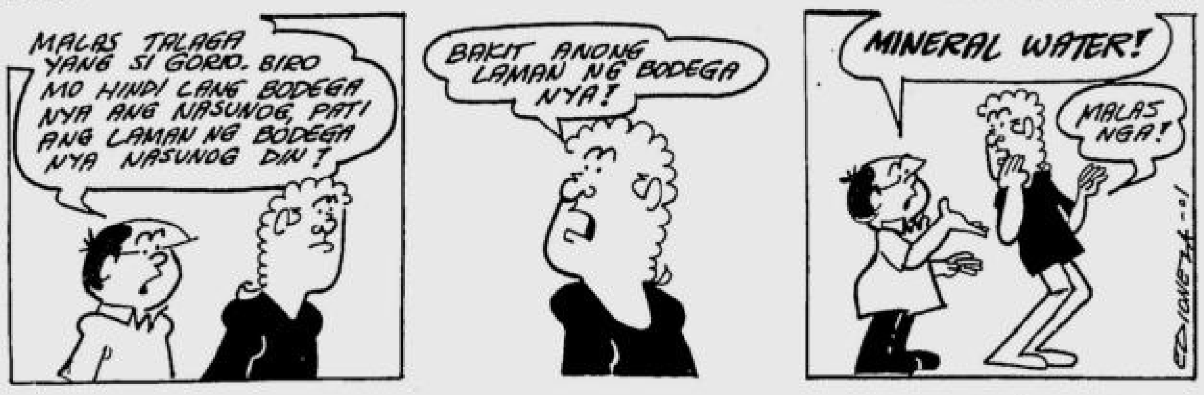
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


GUMUHO ANG PADER NG BANYO. KITANG-KITA NAMIN 'YUNG NALILIGO SA LOOB...
DRIVER NI SENATOR CABALFIN!!
PMJR 12.01

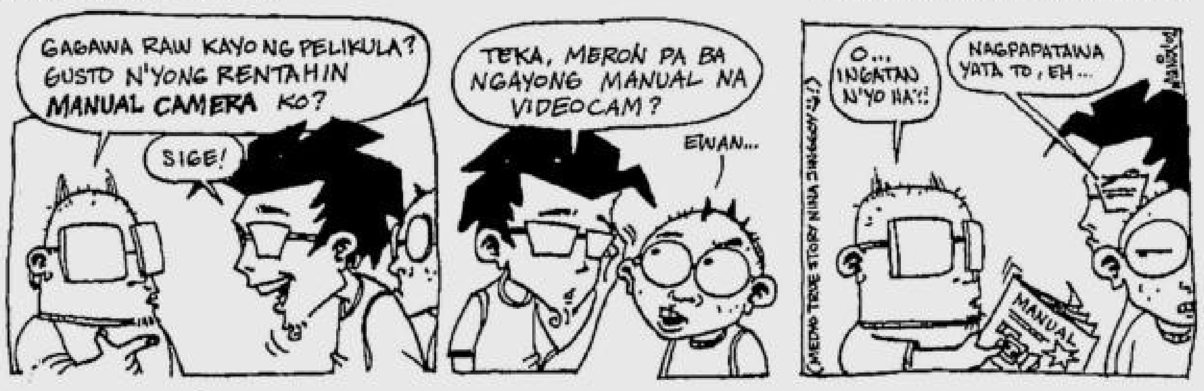
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


MALAS TALAGA YANG SI GORIO. BIRO MO HINDI LANG BODEGA NYA ANG NASUNOG, PATI ANG LAMAN NG BODEGA NYA NASUNOG DIN?
BAKIT ANONG LAMAN NG BODEGA NYA?
MINERAL WATER!
MALAS NGA!
EDIONELA 12-4-01

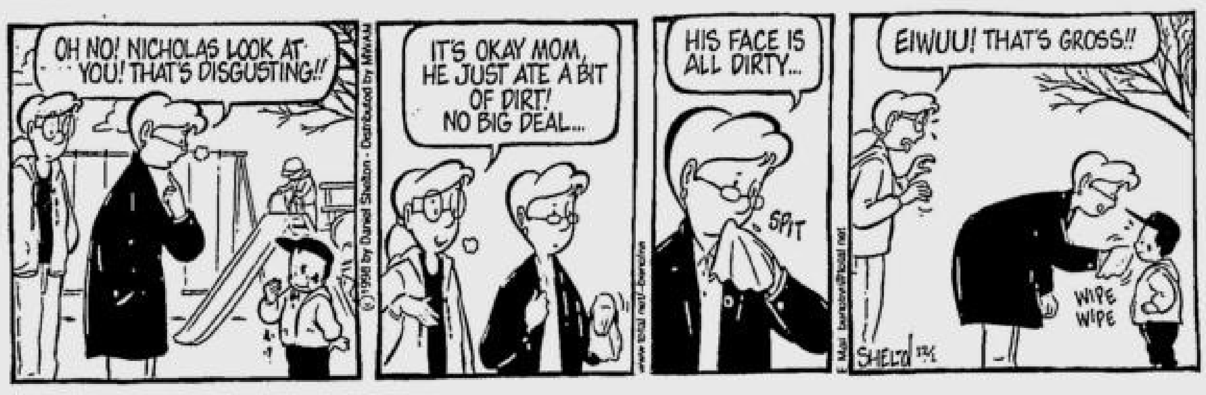
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL/BENG/MANIX


GAGAWA RAW KAYO NG PELIKULA? GUSTO N'YONG RENTAHIN MANUAL CAMERA KO?
SIGE!
TEKA, MERON PA BA NGAYONG MANUAL NA VIDEOCAM?
EWAN...
O... INGATAN N'YO HA?!
NAGPAPATAWA YATA TO, EH...
MANUAL
(MEDYO TRUE STORY NINA JIMBOY 12-3)

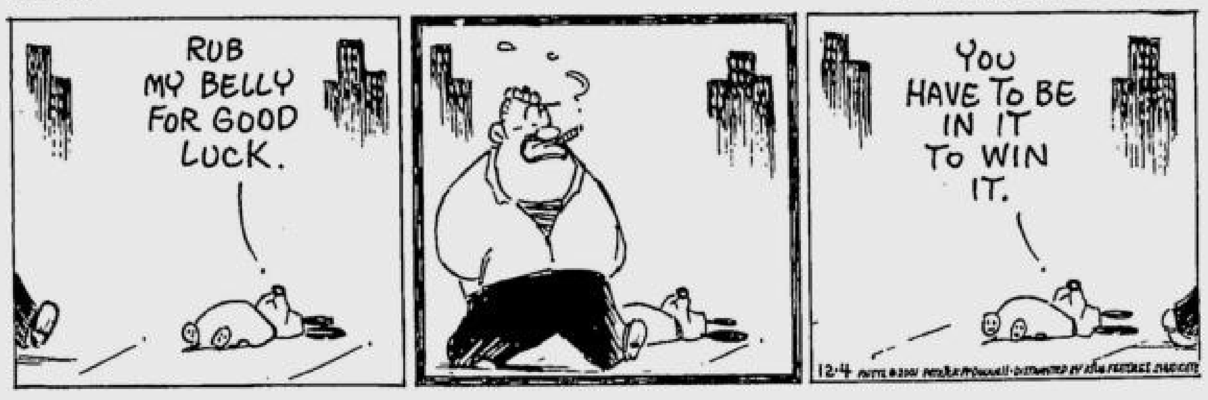
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


OH NO! NICHOLAS LOOK AT YOU! THAT'S DISGUSTING!!
IT'S OKAY MOM, HE JUST ATE A BIT OF DIRT! NO BIG DEAL...
HIS FACE IS ALL DIRTY...
SPIT
EIWUU! THAT'S GROSS!!
WIPE WIPE
SHELTON

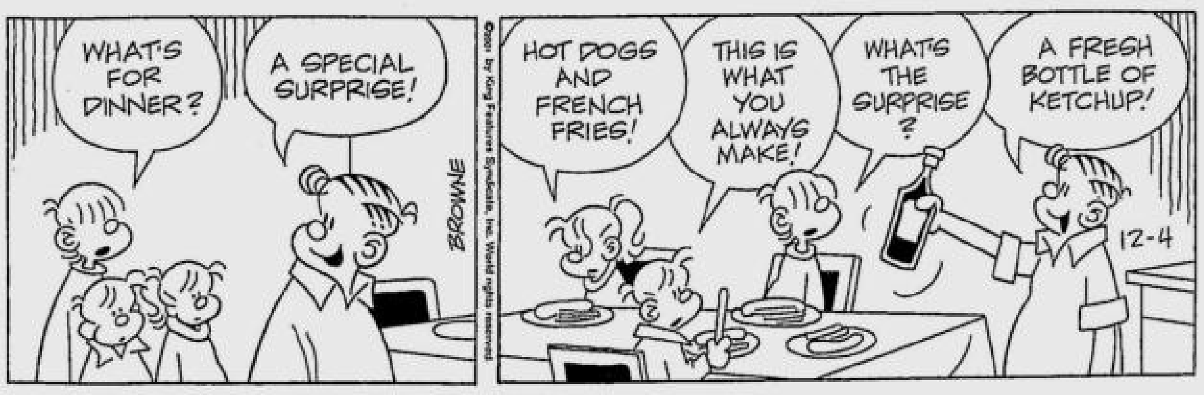
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


RUB MY BELLY FOR GOOD LUCK.
YOU HAVE TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT.
12-4

HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


WHAT'S FOR DINNER?
A SPECIAL SURPRISE!
HOT DOGS AND FRENCH FRIES!
THIS IS WHAT YOU ALWAYS MAKE!
WHAT'S THE SURPRISE?
A FRESH BOTTLE OF KETCHUP!
BROWNE
12-4
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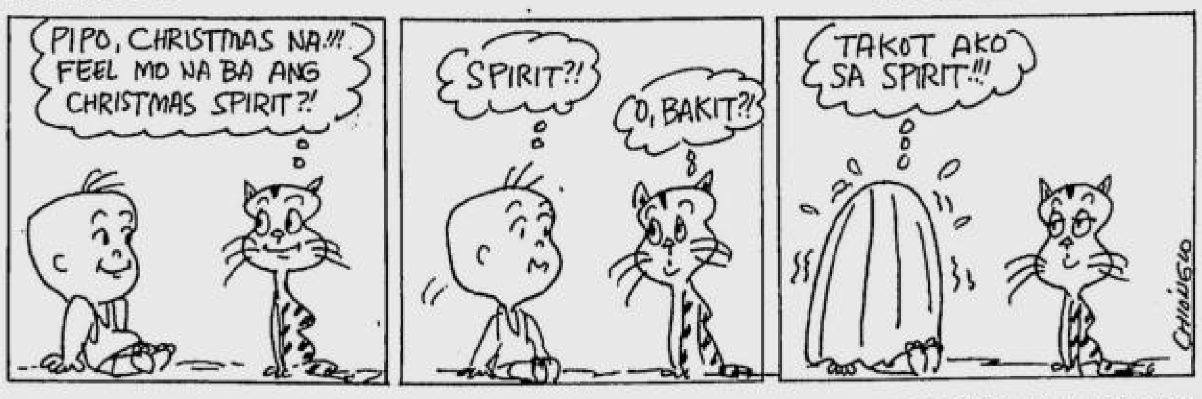
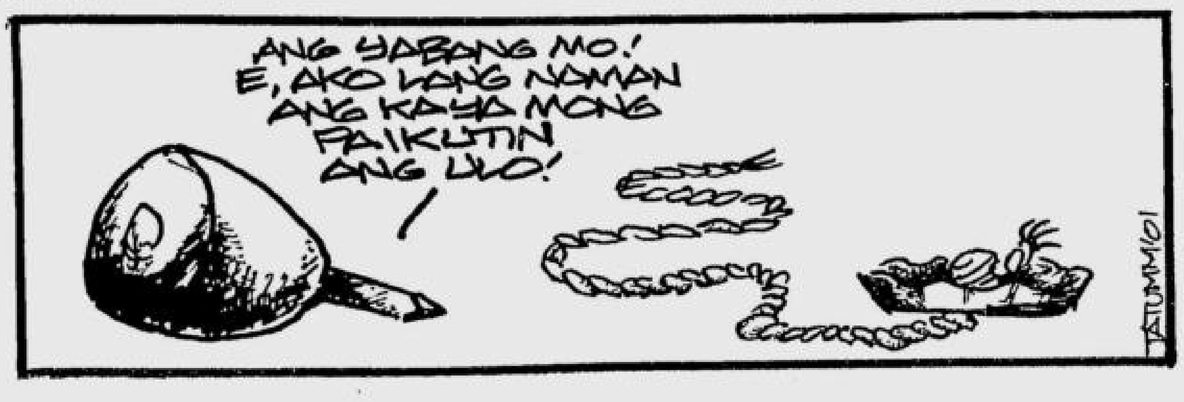
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

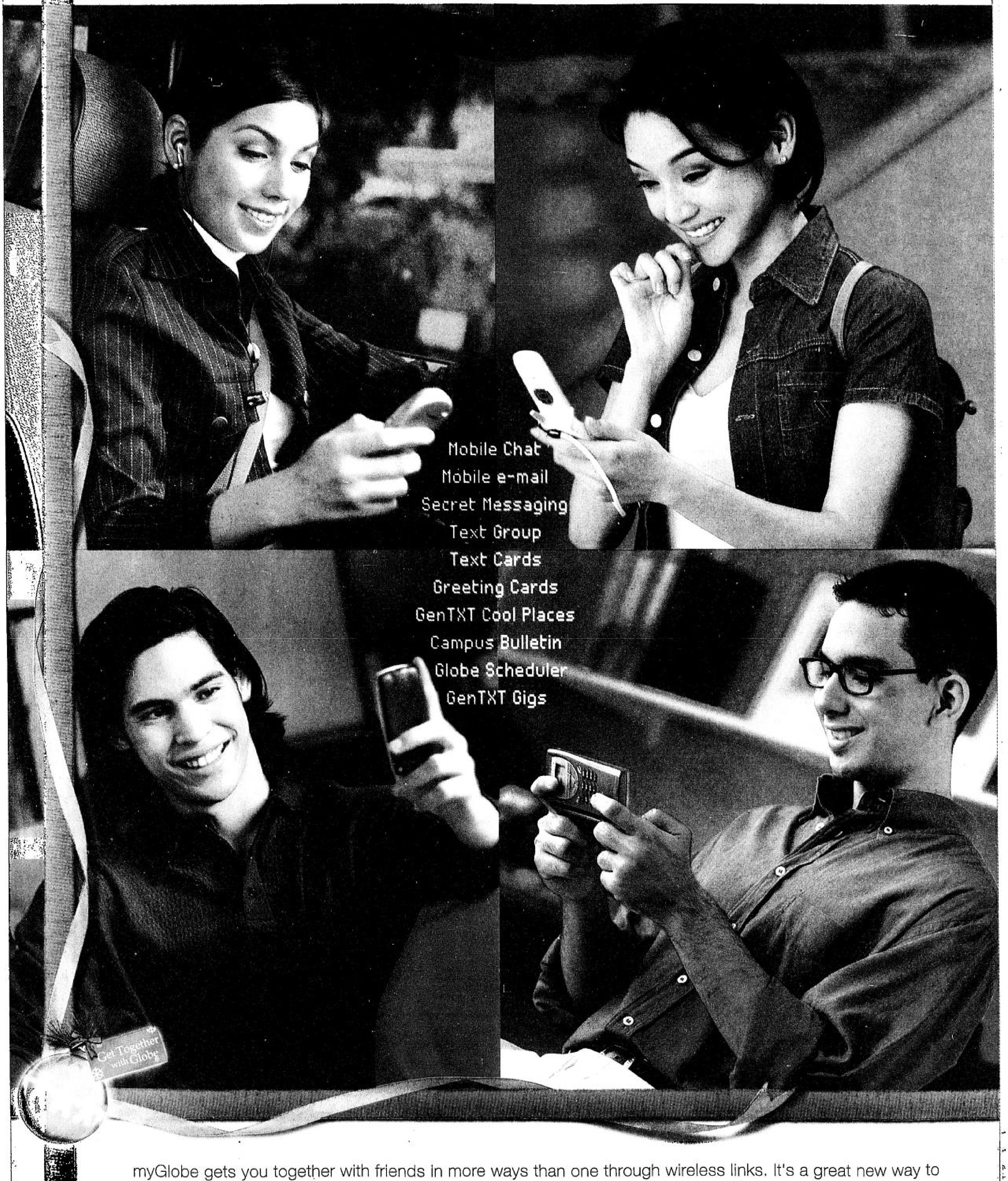

PIPO, CHRISTMAS NA!!! FEEL MO NA BA ANG CHRISTMAS SPIRIT?!
SPIRIT?!
O, BAKIT?!
TAKOT AKO SA SPIRIT!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


ANG YABANG MO! E, AKO LANG NAMAN ANG KAYA MONG PAIKUTIN ANG ULO!
TATUMMO1

Instant Reunion


Mobile Chat
Mobile e-mail
Secret Messaging
Text Group
Text Cards
Greeting Cards
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Campus Bulletin
Globe Scheduler
GenTXT Gigs
Get Together with Globe

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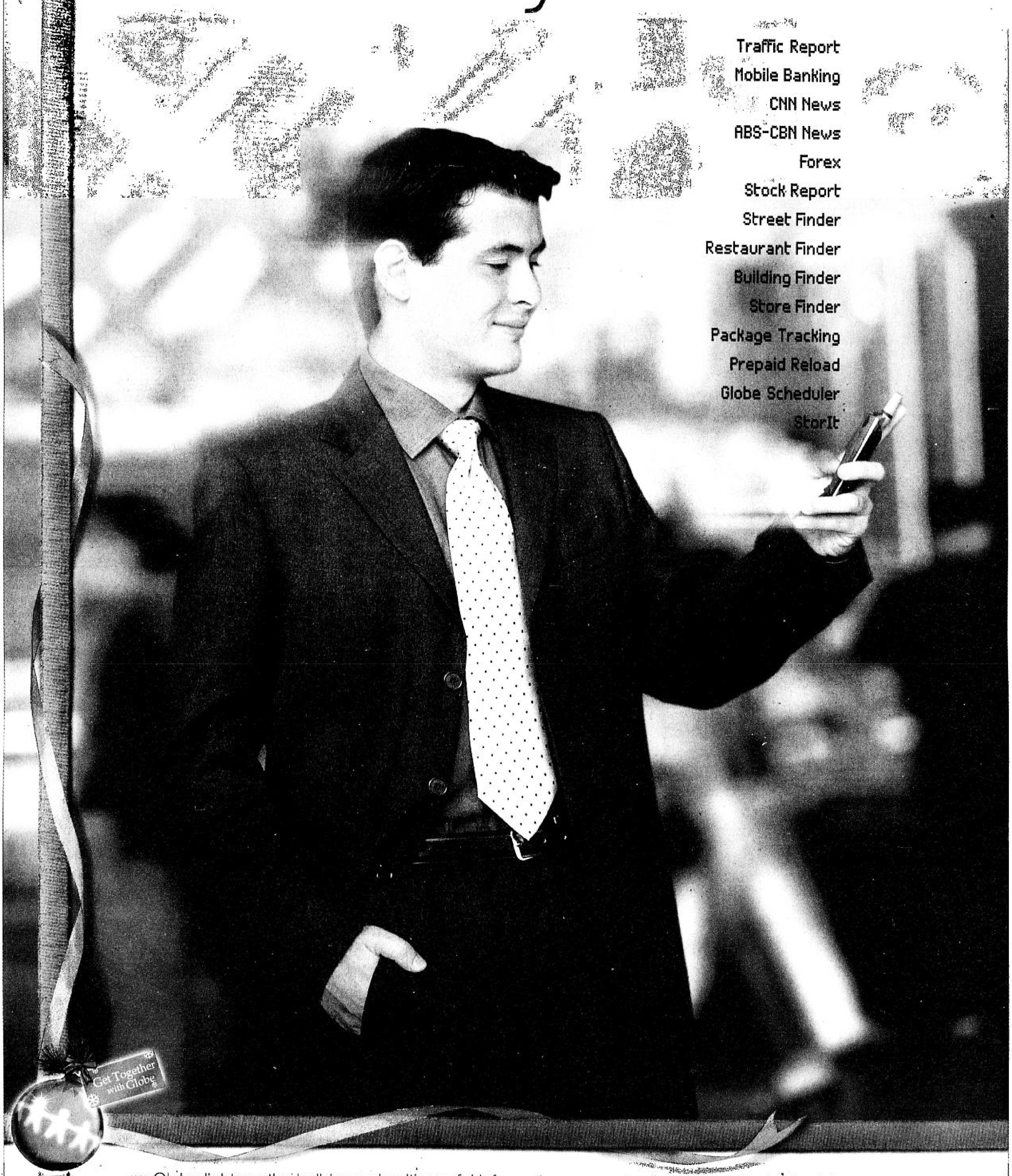

Holiday Rush

Traffic Report
Mobile Banking
CNN News
ABS-CBN News
Forex
Stock Report
Street Finder
Restaurant Finder
Building Finder
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Package Tracking
Prepaid Reload
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StorIt

myGlobe lightens the holiday rush with useful information, accurate direction and helpful advisory you can access on the go. What a relief! Look under these categories: News & Info • Money • My Services

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Information is the key to prevention

> 'I had to get AIDS to find out that people around me had a greater fear; while I was scared of AIDS, they were scared of me'

By Eleanor E. Yu

CINDY is young and vivacious at 27. She counts her mother's death when she was barely 7 as her first loss. At 15 years old, she was forced to leave school after her father died from a road accident, a story she could now relate without shedding tears because, as she says, "Courage to survive my own life is all I've got now."

After losing both parents, she also lost her-

INFORMATION/ p.D3

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MENDEZ MEDICAL GROUP
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HEALTHWAY MEDICAL CLINIC, Basement Level, SM North, Q.C.
• 3rd Flr. The Plaza Bldg., Greenbelt Shopping Centre, Mkt.
• BINONDO 2nd Flr. 414 Paramount Bldg., Quintin Paredes St.
ALABANG TOWN CENTER, Fitness Alabang • Clinic Hours: Tues & Thurs 1-3 Pm
MINDANAO AVENUE BRANCH, 2F Randi Bldg., Mindanao Ave., Q.C.
CEBU HOLDINGS, Suite 105 Cebu Business Park, Ayala Center, Cebu City
PANPANGA CLINIC, G.Y. G Bldg. 2nd Flr. 212 B Mendoza St.
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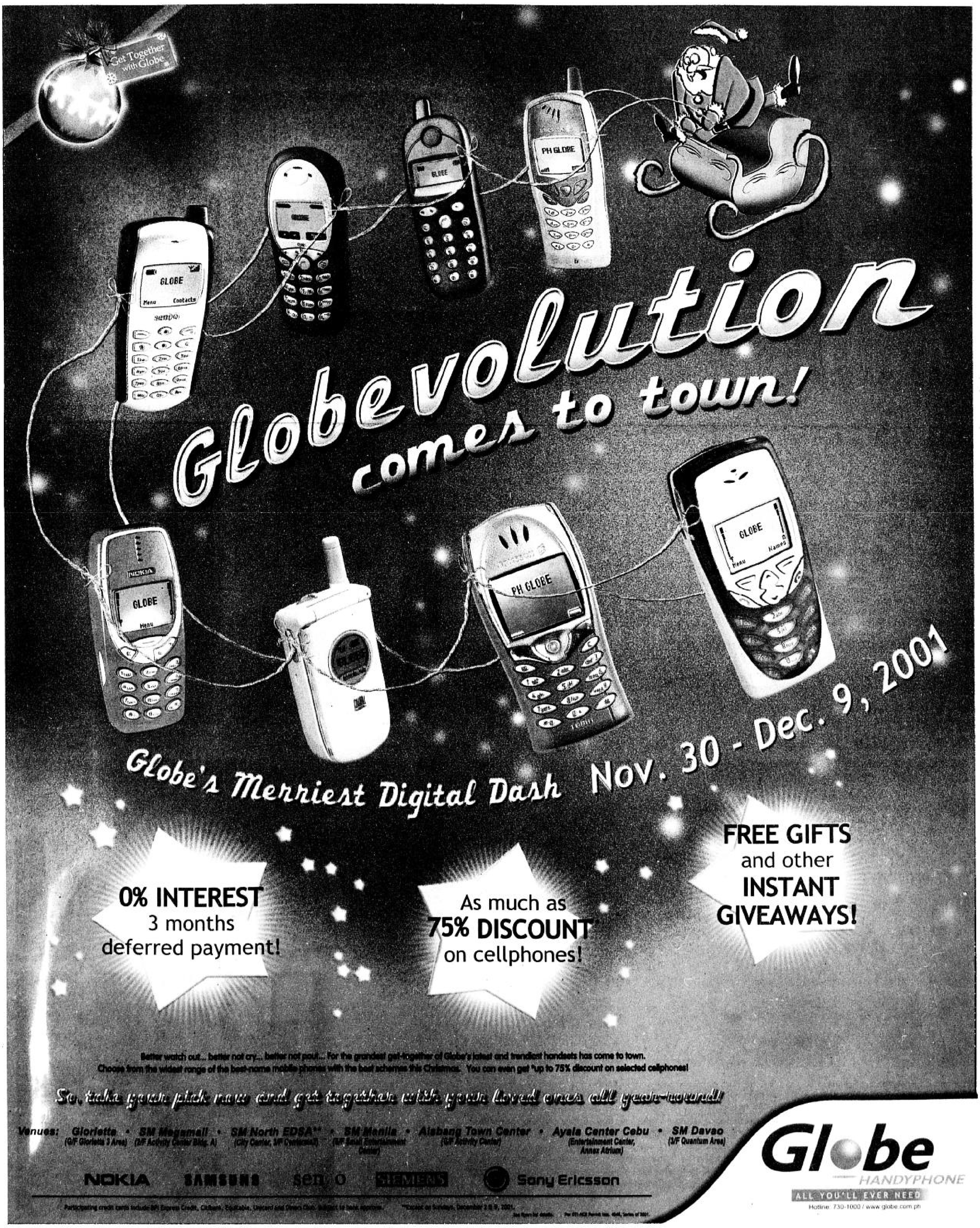

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The beauty of volunteer work

RAY Anne de Guzman, Ms Nueva Ecija

SHERYL Anne U. Ducusin, Ms La Union-San Fernando

INNER beauty will be as much celebrated as the face and the figure when the Millennium Miss Philippines-Red Cross 2001 marks its coronation night this Dec. 5 at the Manila Hotel, to be aired on RPN 9.

"This is one way of giving Filipina volunteers special recognition," says Tessie Usapdin, communications manager of the Philippine National Red Cross. "We want to show Red Cross branches around the world that we have volunteers who are not only committed but beautiful as well."

Although only four major Miss Philippines-Red Cross pageants have been mounted since the Philippine National Red Cross was officially recognized as an independent international chapter in April 1947 (local pageants are held regularly by most of the 88 chapters), the fund-raising event has consistently chosen women blessed with the kind of beauty and character that continues to bloom through the years.

Commercial model and news anchor Liza Beroya was crowned Miss Philippines-Red Cross in the early 1990s. Grace Villacorta earned the coveted title before she pursued her career in fashion modeling.

Usapdin is certain that the winner among the 48 volunteers-contestants of this pageant's special millennium edition will have a very busy schedule.

"It's very fulfilling," she says. "As Ambassador of the Red Cross, the winner will be required to represent the organization and promote its ideals in major functions here and around the country. It's a different experience to be physically involved in the Red Cross' relief operations, blood donations, and rescue and response training. So you've got to be really interested in the Red Cross to join this pageant."

Extending her assistance to this year's Miss Philippines-Red Cross is long-time volunteer leader and timeless beauty Tingting Cojuangco.

Cojuangco first learned of the Red Cross when her mother-in-law, Demetria Sumulong Cojuangco, was Red Cross chair in Tarlac. In 1992, Cojuangco became a volunteer herself after being touched by the NGO's unwavering dedication to the people of Tarlac during her term as governor.

"I worked so closely with them for six years, especially when we had this series of typhoons," she relates. "In Tarlac, we shared relief goods and distributed them to the areas that needed them the most. I've also gone to different provinces introducing the Red Cross and encouraging the youth to donate blood."

She now volunteers her time and effort to the cause because "It makes me feel good when people ask for blood and we are able to give it to them. It has saved a lot of lives."

A distinguished board of judges composed of French Ambassador Gilles Chouraqui, Dr. Peter Walker (Federation Red Cross), Tina Maristela-Ocampo, Edu Manzano, Sari Yap, Fr. Corsie Legaspi, Robert Vincent Jaworski Jr., Chito Macapagal and Rep. Cynthia Villar will choose the Millenium Miss-Red Cross 2001 on pageant night.

"This is an opportunity for her to be more giving and less self-centered," says Cojuangco, herself a striking balance of beauty, brains and heart. "That is the beauty of kindness and service."

Others involved in the production of the Millennium Miss Philippines-Red Cross 2001 pageant are Tinggay Ventosa, Lydia Bonalos, Ben Farrales, Tess Usapdin, Mandy Navasero, Boy Santiago, Boyet Domingo and MVM Productions headed by Maria V. Montelibano as TV director, Behn Cervantes as stage director and Bobby Achacoso as writer.

Performing at the event will be Marissa Sanchez, Ana Fedgi, Janno Gibbs and David Pomeranz. Eddie Mercado, Bing Loyzaga, Nanette Medved and Arnel Ignacio will host the pageant.

Gowns will be provided by the Fashion Designers Association of the Philippines, shoes by Via Venetto, jeans by Soen, hair and makeup by James Cooper. Other sponsors are Tapa King, Whistle Stop and Cabalen. Major sponsors are Unilever, The Manila Hotel, Pagcor and PCSO.

Tickets per table of 10 at P10,000 are available at the PNRC offices at Port Area or call 527-6221.

AGNES Coronel, Ms Tarlac

GRACE Joy D. Suficiencia, Ms Southern Leyte

JANICE Gay M. Alop, Ms Olongapo

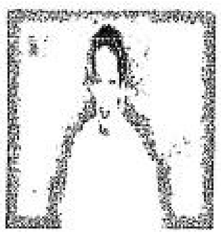
LOUELLA O. Alvarico, Ms Siquijor

NATHALIE Lou R. Plaza, Ms Agusan del Norte- Butuan City

ABILENE Alhambra, Ms Manila

SEATED from left: Maria Montelibano, Behn Cervantes, Tingting Cojuangco and Mellie Ablaza; standing: Tess Usapdin, Boy Santiago, Lito Perez, Edgar Madamba and Ben Farrales

PNRC's Tess Usapdin and Tingting Cojuangco, volunteer leader and chair for the contest, with PNRC's Jullie Alemania, Lydia Bonalos and Nieves Rivera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Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.
MEDICard

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FAQs (frequently asked questions)

Does MEDICard offer life insurance?
MEDICard is a Health Maintenance Organization. We provide comprehensive healthcare services to our members through a network of accredited doctors, dentists and hospitals. However, we do not offer life insurance. We do understand the financial dread of loosing a family's breadwinner, and to assist our members during such times, we included in our healthcare program, Members' Financial Assistance. MFA is a cash benefit given in instances of death (natural or accidental means) of a principal member. The benefit may be availed by the immediate dependents of the deceased, subject to terms and conditions provided.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Dr. Cesar Loberiza Martinez is MEDICard's accredited specialist based in St. Luke's Medical Center (SLMC) and has been rendering quality healthcare services to its members for more than 8 years now. Doc Cesar is a batch 1984 Medicine graduate from UERMMMC. He later pursued further studies specializing in Ophthalmology at SLMC. He holds a Fellowship degree with the Philippine College of Surgeons and is a valued member to the Philippine Society of Ophthalmology. Aside from his affiliations with medical associations, he is also currently the National President of the Volkswagen Club of the Philippines and has special interest in sports, reading and in creative writing. For your consultation needs, visit him at the Cathedral Heights Bldg. room N-618 during weekdays, except on Wednesdays from 9 AM to 12 noon and then again from 2 to 4 in the afternoon, and on Saturdays from 9 AM to 12 noon.

New Corporate Member

MEDICard PHILIPPINES INC
YOKOHAMA TIRE PHILIPPINES, INC., one of the country's leading tire manufacturers, signed recently its corporate agreement with MEDICard for the healthcare program of its employees and dependents. Present during the ceremonies were (Sitting L-R) Mr. Rey Mandocdoc (Plant Control & Safety Section Head), Mr. Voltaire Victoria (MEDICard Marketing & Sales Manager), Mr. Luis S. Montoya (MEDICard EVP & GM), Mr. Hisao Hashimoto (EVP), Mr. Ryuji Tachibana (VP-Admin/Treasurer) & Ms. Glenda Santos (HR Manager); (Standing L-R) Mr. Bernard Zulueta (MEDICard Orientation Specialist), Mr. Arthur Bustos (Yokohama LMC Committee Head-Sports & Social), Jasmin Esnelo (MEDICard Nurse), Kaye Santos, Fatima Diaz & Lisa Alfonso (Co. Nurses), Ms. Roda Castro (LMC Treasurer), Ms. Beth Gomez (HR Benefits-Supervisor) & Mr. Jovito Matias (LMC Chairman).

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com.

For individual or family membership inquiries, please call 818-2161 and look for Ms. Joy Mendiola. For group or corporate membership, please call 817-5136, 817-4985 or 817-5127 and look for a membership consultant.

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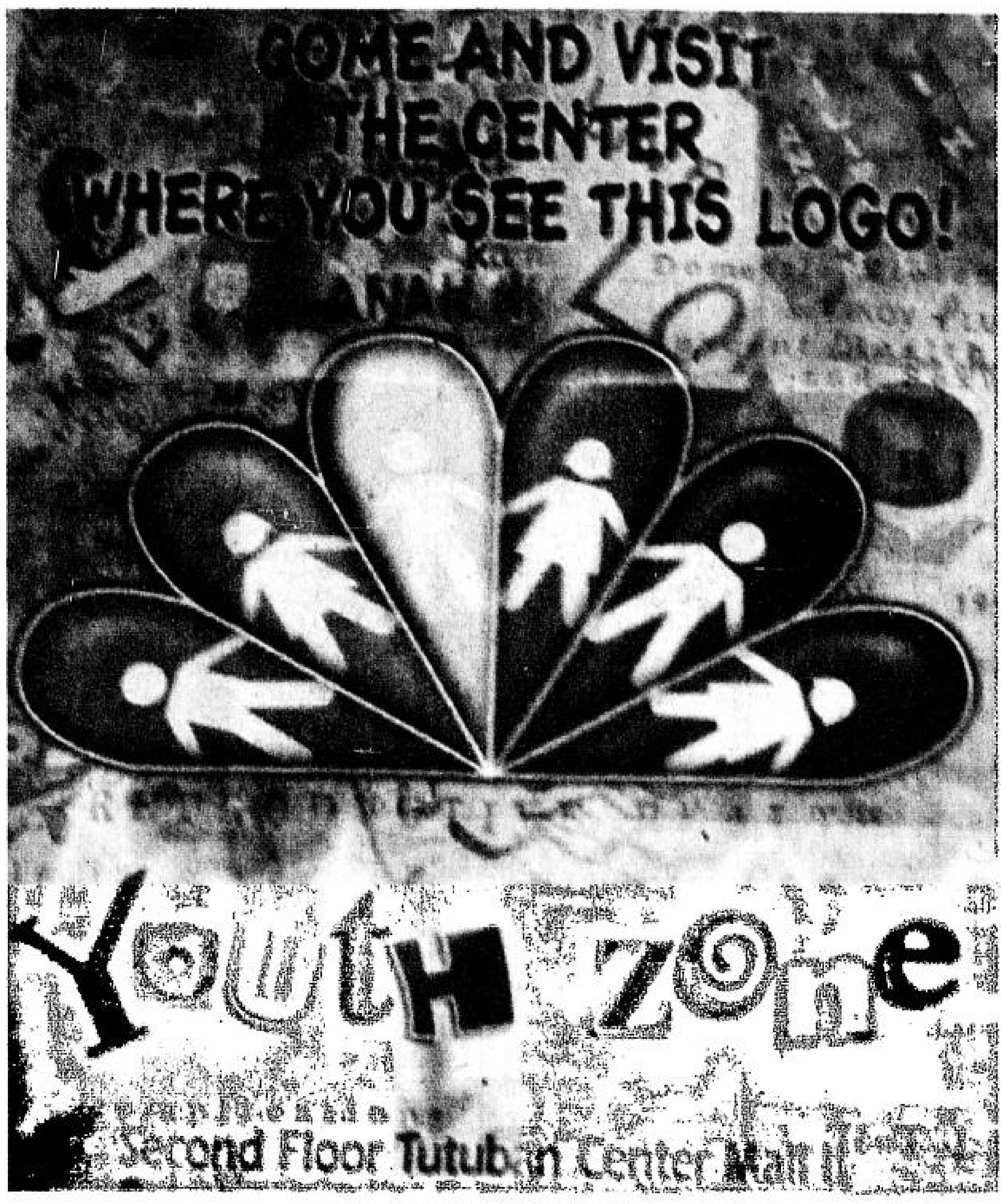
Information is the key to prevention

(From page D1)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self to drugs, then to an immoral life as sex worker for many years. When she was diagnosed with Kaposi's Sarcoma (KS), one of the symptoms of advanced AIDS, her initial reactions were shock and denial. She tried to convince herself that the doctor had erred and she decided to ignore the whole matter.

She continued to live as if nothing bothered her. When one day she noticed some dark spots on her right leg that would not go away, she went back to the hospital, where she was forced to admit that for the last few months she had been experiencing night sweats and recurrent fever. She was again diagnosed with Kaposi's Sarcoma resulting in profound depression.

"I had to get AIDS to find out that people around me had a greater fear," says Cindy. "While I was scared of AIDS, they were scared of me."

There are people with Aids (PWA) like Cindy who, after a diagnosis of HIV positive, live in fear and isolation because of the stigma surrounding AIDS. Many learn to survive by living a double life, unable to disclose their secret to most people for fear of discrimination.

Cindy's story has inspired me to work with PWA through the Remedios AIDS Foundation. Before that, I had worked as art therapist for terminally ill cancer patients. I listened to people at the end of their lives who felt regretful for living the way they did or having the values they had.

Worse than cancer

I think AIDS may even be worse than cancer because cancer patients usually have family support while, because of the threat posed by AIDS, it being a contagious disease, many PWA are rejected by their families.

Whether we care to admit it or not, the stigma attached to AIDS is so deep it can kill the spirit of PWA much faster than the virus itself. We cannot blame those who avoid the HIV positive or PWA because it is natural to fear that which we don't understand. This is why it is important to educate the public about HIV and AIDS. There has to be a provision for accurate information about the issue and honest discussion of issues relating to sexuality.

PWAs are vulnerable people, and for them to experience indifference or discrimination from others will only diminish an often already fragile sense of self-esteem and helplessness. But the need to deal with this disease is more serious than emotional for its devastating effects are confined not just within the families but are threatening the global existence.

The World Health Organization estimates that as of the end of 1996 there were about 22.6 million adults and 830,000 children living with AIDS and HIV. About 94 percent lives in developing countries. WHO estimates that the pandemic grows at the rate of about 8,500 new infections every day. Since the beginning of the epidemic, at least 6 million people have died of AIDS.

In the Philippines, reported cases are believed to represent only a fraction of actual cases in the country. According to the Department of Health, the real figure may be 100 times that of the reported cases. More conservative estimates put the figure at 20,000, quite low when compared with many other countries but still alarming. About 70 percent of reported HIV/AIDS cases in the Philippines involve people aged between 20-40 years old.

Transmitted, not hereditary

According to the book "Understanding HIV and AIDS" by Dr. Michael Tan and Bernard Tomas, AIDS is transmitted, not hereditary or inborn.

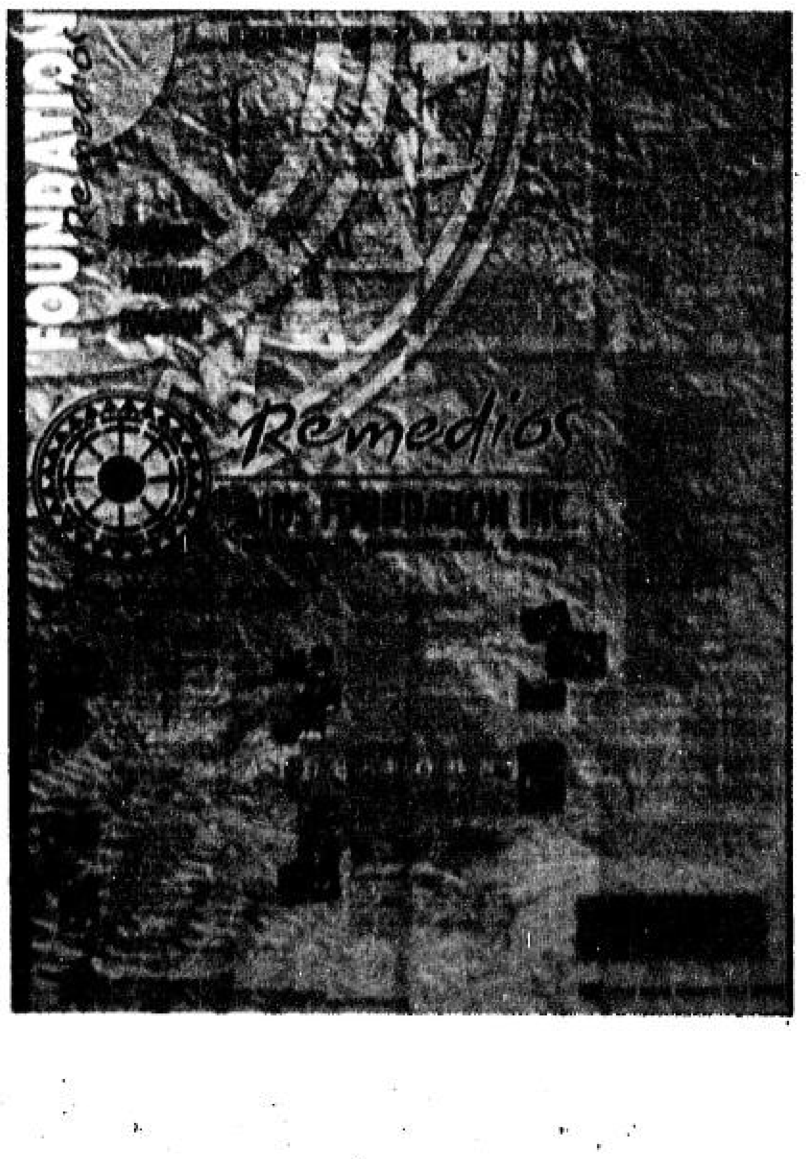
The Human Immunodeficiency Virus or HIV causes AIDS. The virus causes the immune system to break down, which makes the patient susceptible to many infections that eventually result in death.

HIV belongs to a specific family sometimes referred to as "slow viruses." The time between infection and the appearance of symptoms tends to be much longer, allowing more opportunities for these microorganisms to be transmitted to other hosts.

Is there a difference between HIV and AIDS? Yes, a person can be infected by HIV but may not develop AIDS. This is why internationally the medical community now talks about HIV disease rather than AIDS alone. HIV disease is a series of conditions starting from asymptomatic phase to the development of AIDS, with many other infections and diseases as the body's immune system breaks down.

A person who has been infected with HIV virus can still look healthy.

A few days to a few weeks after becoming infected with HIV, some people will develop symptoms like those of flu, fatigue, headaches, fever, sore throat, enlarged lymph nodes and sweating. During this time a person may transmit the virus and HIV begins to weaken the immune system and, eventually, AIDS develops. About 60 percent of the adult cases may progress to AIDS. It takes seven to 12 years before HIV develops into AIDS.



How to fight AIDS

Intensive research has established how AIDS is transmitted, which should put us in the position to prevent HIV infection since there is no cure yet.

HIV thrives in many types of body fluids but for an infection to occur, there must be sufficient amounts of the virus transmitted and a way for virus to enter the bloodstream. Since HIV is found mainly in blood, semen or cervical vaginal mucus and breast milk, we can see why the virus is more likely to be transmitted through sexual intercourse, blood transfusions and sharing of infected syringes and needles among intravenous drug users, vertically or prenatally (from pregnant woman to the fetus, child delivery or breastfeeding).

HIV is not transmitted through casual contact in schools, homes, hospitals, insects, foods, water, toilets, swimming pools, drinking and eating utensils.

For further preventive measures, be aware of the ways by which one can receive infected blood such as through blood transfusion, sharing of unsterilized syringes, needles used intravenously, transmission during pregnancy, organ donation if a person receives an organ from an infected donor, accidental exposure in hospitals and clinics—through needle-stick injuries or cuts with sharp instruments contaminated with HIV. Sexual intercourse remains to be the main route of transmitting semen and cervical or vaginal secretion.

Prevention is key

Complete sexual abstinence is one option, but not the most practical for most people. It is better then to advocate for safe sex.

Blood donors should first be screened to make sure they are not infected. Health workers should use gloves and be cautious when handling blood, semen, vaginal secretions and cerebrospinal fluid, sypnovial and amniotic fluid. Drug users should be counseled on the risks of HIV/AIDS that come with sharing of needles and syringes. Mothers infected with HIV should be informed that there is 20-40 percent chance that they can pass on the infection to their babies during pregnancy or at delivery.

The most widely used tests to detect HIV infection are those that look for anti-HIV antibodies in the blood. Newer tests involve polymerase chain reaction that detects part of the virus itself but such tests are still too expensive for widespread use. The DOH and several private institutions conduct the test. Check with DOH about the reliability of supposedly accredited private institutions.

There are medicines available that are used to treat but not to cure HIV infection. Alternative medicines such as acupuncture, meditation and medicinal plants are also used. None of these alternative therapies have been proven to cure but they do seem to be useful for improving the quality of life of the patients.

The key word to save the world from the threat of AIDS remains to be prevention and this can be done only through education. Let us give life the reverence due it. The life we are living now is the greatest gift we have. Let us make something beautiful out of it.

(Editor's Note: Dec. 1 was World AIDS Day. The author is the founder of Visual Communication Foundation, a group of artists that offers art therapy for terminally ill people. She is also a volunteer with the Remedios AIDS Foundation. The RAF offers confidential counseling to PWA through tels. 524-0551, 524-4427 or 524-4507.)

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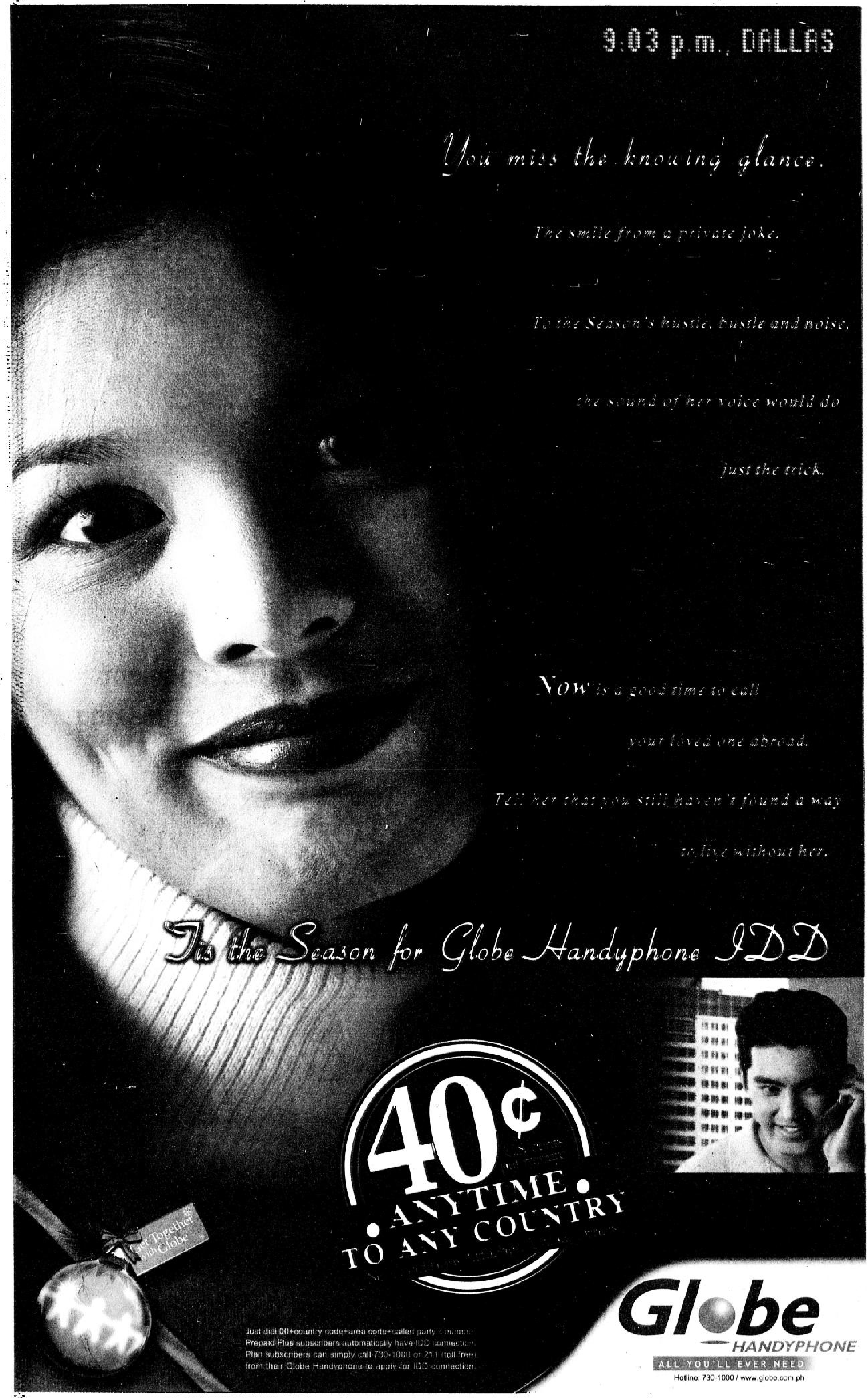

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